

UiO : **Department of Culture Studies  
and Oriental Languages**  
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# **Egypt: Freedom and Justice to the Bedouins in Sinai?**

A Study of the Freedom and Justice Party's Policy  
Towards the Bedouin Minority in Sinai

*Autumn 2013*



UNIVERSITY OF OSLO: FACULTY OF HUMANITIES



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Heidi Breen



Autumn 2013

(60sp)

MA Thesis in Middle East and North Africa Studies at the  
Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages



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Print: Reprosentralen, University of Oslo

## Abstract

Much research has been devoted to analysing the Muslim Brotherhood's (MB) ideology, and many have speculated on what kind of policy the MB would lead if it came to power. In this study I take a look at the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), which has its roots in the MB, and the party's approach towards the increasing radicalization of Sinai. If the situation in Sinai is left to further escalate, this might push Israel to switch from a defensive to a pre-emptive tactic, potentially causing a regional conflict, perhaps even a war. The perpetrators of the various violent attacks in Sinai are described as being predominantly Bedouins. This study aims to answer the question of whether and how the FJP's planned policy towards the Bedouin minority, was new.

The Mubarak regime discriminated the Bedouins and violated their human rights: social, economical, cultural, civil and political. Three research institutes have provided the Egyptian government with several policy recommendations on how to solve the Sinai issue. The most recurring recommendation is that the Egyptian government should recognize and protect the Bedouins human rights. In "Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights", Kymlicka argues that some minority groups should, in addition to basic human rights, be given polyethnic rights. Moreover, he adds that some groups should get a limited right to self-government, in order to prevent secession from their original nation.

By means of interviewing several members of the FJP and studying the party's program and public statements, I discovered that my sources in the FJP did not portray the Bedouins as a minority, and were therefore not planning to give the Bedouins any *polyethnic rights*. On the other hand, my informants underlined the importance of protecting basic civil and political rights of all individuals regardless of group affiliation, in addition to implementing a comprehensive socio-economic plan for the entire Sinai. Regardless of my sources' view on the Bedouins, the party's practice of dealing with Bedouin representatives and not interfering with various Bedouin tribal institutions, could indicate a pragmatic view on their limited *self-government rights*. The conclusion of this thesis show that the FJP's policy plans to a large extent follow the most repeated policy recommendations, and thus, the party's policy towards Sinai and the Bedouins represent a rather different approach from that of the Mubarak regime.





## Acknowledgements

First of all I would like to thank the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, particularly the TERRA project, for awakening my interest for Sinai throughout my summer internship. I especially want to thank my supervisor, Bjørn Olav Utvik, for constructive and invaluable feedback throughout the work on this thesis. Thank you for introducing me to some of my informants and giving so many interesting lectures about the Muslim Brotherhood. And most of all, thank you for so many good conversations and for listening. I would further like to thank all of my informants for taking time to talk to me, your input has been invaluable for this research project.

Many thanks to all of my wonderful friends for supporting me and giving me great advice throughout this period. Especially thanks to David and Katja for correcting my spelling mistakes and giving me constructive criticism, thanks to Dina, Elisabeth and Sturla for feedback and encouragement during our coffee breaks.

Many, many thanks to my family for quality time, which gave me more energy to work on this master thesis. And lastly, I am forever indebted to my amazing husband John Anders, for encouraging and supporting me, making me dinner and cleaning the house when the deadline was closing in, and not least for putting up with a at times crazy, thesis-writing wife. Without you, this thesis would not have been completed.

## List of Abbreviations

AAB	The Abdullah Azzam Brigades
AI	Jaish al-Islam (Army of Islam)
ABM	Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis
AH	Ansar al-Haqq
AJSP	Ansar al-Jihad in the Sinai Peninsula
AQSP	al-Qaida in the Sinai Peninsula
NDP	The National Democratic Party
FJP	The Freedom and Justice Party
GI	Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya
GIA	Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya al-Alamiyya
ICG	International Crisis Group
IED	Improvised Explosive Devices
IDF	Israel Defence Forces
JS	Jund al-Sharia
MB	The Muslim Brotherhood
MSC	Majlis al-Shura lil-Mujahidin fil-Quds
MFO	The Multinational Force and Observers
MM	Al-Mujahidin fi-Misr
NDP	The National Democratic Party
PIJ	Palestinian Islamic Jihad
PRC	Popular Resistance Committees
SDA	The National Authority for the Development of the Sinai Peninsula
SCA	The Supreme Council of Antiquities
SSI	The State Security Investigations Service
TWJ	Al-Tawhid wal-Jihad
TKWJ	Al-Takfir wal-Jihad
QB	Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades

## A note on transliteration and translation

Throughout this thesis, I have followed a simplified version of the system for transliteration as used by the International Journal of Middle East Studies. Please refer to “IJMES Transliteration Guide” in the list of references.

In the transcription of Arabic words I have used no diacritical marks. Both ‘ayn (‘) and hamza (’), which is distinguished from an apostrophe (’), are marked within Arabic words, while initial hamza and ‘ayn have been omitted. For example, *ashrāf* is rendered *ashraf* and ‘urf is rendered *urf*. In the case of ambiguous quotes, I provide a full transliteration, including diacritical marks, in the footnotes.

The definite article al- is lower case everywhere, except when in first word of a sentence or an endnote. When prepositions or conjunctions are followed by al-, the *A* elides, forming a contraction rendered as wal-, bil-, and lil-. I have also chosen not to apply the system of so-called sun-letters, as it would have served few purposes in the context of this thesis.

Transliterated names and titles of organizations are capitalized, with no italics. Egyptian names with the Arabic letter *jim*, will be rendered with the letter *g*, which represent the Egyptian sound, for example: Al-Gama‘a al-Islamiyya. I have not provided a translation or transliteration of Arabic words that are generally used in English like the words sharia, jihad, al-Qaida and Cairo.



## Preface

When writing this thesis I did not foresee that a military *coup d'état* was going to overthrow Egypt's first democratically elected president and his government. Some might argue this thesis is no longer relevant as the FJP was overthrown and is now even banned. Moreover, Mursi served as president for only a year, and the FJP was part of the government for eleven months. Did they even have time to implement a policy?

The objective of this thesis was not to show whether or not the FJP's policy was possible to realize, but rather to analyse their political plan for Sinai. My aim is to find out whether and how the FJP's policy plans represented "something new", and to describe the characteristics of their intended policy. The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) is perhaps the world's most famous Islamist group and many have speculated about how it would act once in power. In this thesis I have taken a "snapshot" of Egypt's history, and looked at a fraction of FJP's planned policy, namely the Sinai issue. This thesis shows not only how the party was planning to approach a violent opposition in a strategically important area, but also how the FJP was aiming to deal with an important minority, i.e. the Bedouins. These are also questions that the new political leadership in Egypt will have to answer, which make this thesis still relevant today.

Former president Mursi was accused of being "a Mubarak with beard," which suggests that Mursi and his party, the FJP, were not different from the dictator they helped to oust in the 2011 revolution. However, throughout the FJP's time in the government, the situation in Sinai actually calmed and there were relatively few clashes between the military forces and various militants. Following the coup, Sinai has rapidly radicalized, and the situation looks more and more like a civil war every day. Bedouin leaders say that locals have been angered by the coup because it brought an end to Egypt's blossoming democracy. Other Bedouins say that Mursi had no control over Sinai, but underline that "he didn't insult or arrest anyone. When you would pass by the checkpoints, they would respect you. Now we're back to the way it was before."<sup>1</sup> This could indicate that if the FJP was given a chance, it might have had a moderating effect at the situation in Sinai.

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<sup>1</sup> Abigail Hauslohner, "In Egypt's Sinai, insurgency taking root," *The Washington Post*, July 29, 2013,

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# 1 The Problematic Sinai Issue

On August 5, 2012 close to a dozen unidentified armed men tried to enter Israel from Sinai, killing 16 Egyptian soldiers on the Egyptian side of the border. The perpetrators were described as “mostly local Bedouins.”<sup>2</sup> For almost thirty years, Sinai has been regarded as a buffer zone between mainland Egypt and its eastern neighbours. However, as various scholars have noticed, the buffer erodes and Sinai is becoming a new front for Islamist extremism, targeting both Egyptians and Israelis.<sup>3</sup>

Following the Egyptian revolution of 2011, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) announced their intention of founding a political party entitled the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP). The party won a decisive plurality in both houses of parliament during the winter 2011 – 2012 elections. However, two days before the presidential election in June 2012, the parliament was dissolved after the court found the voting system unconstitutional. Following that, the FJP’s previous chairman, Muhammad Mursi, won Egypt’s first democratic presidential election. Three days prior to the cross boarder attack, the first Cabinet under Mursi was sworn in. The new Cabinet consisted of five FJP members in addition to the president, which made the FJP the most powerful political party in Egypt at that time. Just before Mursi was elected president, he vowed to allocate 20 billion pound to the development of Sinai stating: “We will not forget Sinai anymore.”<sup>4</sup>

The radicalization of Sinai has consequences not just domestically, testing the strength of its new political reality, but also for neighbouring countries. If the situation is allowed to further escalate, this might push Israel to switch from a defensive to a pre-emptive posture. Any Israeli military forces in Sinai is a clear violation of the peace treaty with Egypt and would cause a regional conflict, perhaps even war. This thesis aims to answer whether and how the FJP wanted to approach the radicalization of Sinai and consequently the Bedouins who are accused of being the perpetrators of several attacks. How was the FJP planning to approach this indigenous minority?

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<sup>2</sup> Yaakov Katz, "Israel considers more Egyptian troops in Sinai," *The Jerusalem Post*, August 7, 2012, [www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Israel-considers-more-Egyptian-troops-in-Sinai](http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Israel-considers-more-Egyptian-troops-in-Sinai) (accessed June 4, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Referring to the report of Nicolas Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," (London: Chatham House, 2012); and Ehud Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front," *Policy Notes* no.9 (2012).

<sup>4</sup> "Dr. Morsi: 20 Billion Pounds for the Reconstruction of Sinai over 5 Years," *Freedom and Justice Party*, April 29, 2012, [www.fjparty.org/article.php?id=659&ref=search.php](http://www.fjparty.org/article.php?id=659&ref=search.php) (accessed February 8, 2013).

## 1.2 Previous Research

Sinai has become increasingly radicalized for at least a decade, however, prior to 2011, there are few comprehensive studies on the radicalization of Sinai. Egyptian and Israeli interest in Sinai has almost exclusively been of a geostrategic and military nature. Characteristically the best maps of Sinai are not publically available.<sup>5</sup> After 2011, the radicalization of Sinai has become a popular topic among scholars, but perhaps particularly in the media.<sup>6</sup>

I have chosen to present two reports and one scholarly article on the increasingly radicalization of Sinai. The two reports are grounded on interviews with Sinai Bedouins, and the article makes use of statements by Bedouins published on social media. Renowned research institutions have published the three texts, each representing a different focus on the situation and emphasizing different aspects, seeking to explain the reason(s) for the radicalization. I will argue that combined, they present a comprehensive representation of the current situation. Furthermore, I have chosen these three texts as they all provide several policy recommendations to the Egyptian government on how to best deal with the situation.

In 2007, International Crisis Group (ICG) published a report entitled “Egypt’s Sinai Question”.<sup>7</sup> This report came as a response to the three bombings in Taba (2004), in Sharm al-Shaykh (2005) and in Dahab (2006), which in total resulted in the death of around 130 people. A group consisting of Bedouins and Egyptian-born Palestinians -all Sinai inhabitants- was later convicted of being responsible for all three incidents.<sup>8</sup>

The report argues that Sinai traditionally has been a difficult area to integrate into Egypt, in particular due to a policy of unequal development in the area that has favoured migrants from the Nile Valley on behalf of the local population. The ICG addressed the Egyptian government on this topic and proposed that they prepare a comprehensive social and economic development plan for Sinai, in consultation with community leaders, the private sector and donors. The plan should deal with the

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<sup>5</sup> “Egypt’s Sinai Question,” (Cairo/Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2007), p.9.

<sup>6</sup> A quick Internet search on news articles regarding Sinai in the years between 2000 and 2010 provides 131 results, while in the period from 2011 to 2013 gives 37, 800 hits.

<sup>7</sup> The ICG is generally recognised as the world’s leading independent source of analysis and advice to governments, and intergovernmental bodies like the United Nations and European Union, on the prevention and resolution of deadly conflict. For more information see: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/>

<sup>8</sup> This report is the most comprehensive and detailed public report that exists on these bombings and the investigation that followed.

region as a whole and take into account the socio-economic interdependence of the north and south, and should also eliminate all criteria and procedures that discriminate against the local population.<sup>9</sup> An important part of the discrimination is the dispossession of traditional Bedouin inhabited land and the denial of ownership rights in parts of Sinai. During the last fifteen years, the government sale of coastal land to major investment groups has pushed local people out of the tourism development zones and closed access to the main source of income in the region.<sup>10</sup>

The ICG report also stresses the need to integrate the local communities and “their genuine political representatives in development decision-making for Sinai”.<sup>11</sup> The report also addresses Egyptian political parties and recommends that they should establish, or, where already present, develop and extend a political presence in Sinai. The parties should recruit members from the local populations and provide organized channels for expression of their particular needs and grievances.<sup>12</sup>

The report also underlines the importance of acknowledging Sinai’s distinct cultural and historical traditions as part of Egypt’s national heritage and fund projects that preserve them, stating that the Egyptian government had a centralist, authoritarian vision that generally ignored the special characteristics of its provinces.<sup>13</sup>

Following the investigation of the Taba attack, over three thousand persons were arrested, and according to Human Rights Watch, several detainees were tortured during the investigations.<sup>14</sup> To prevent future attacks in Sinai, the report argues that in addition to the presence of a strong military, good intelligence is of great importance, which in turn depends on a fundamentally cooperative attitude of the majority of the local population. The ICG report recommends that in order to transform local attitudes and make the local population perceive the Egyptian rule as legitimate, the government should redefine the political, economic, social and cultural choices made for the region, and adopt a new policy aimed at fully integrating the region’s population, on terms it can accept, into the Egyptian national community.

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<sup>9</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question," p.ii.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.ii.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.19.

<sup>14</sup> "Egypt: Mass Arrests and Torture in Sinai," *Human Rights Watch* 17, no. 3 (2005).

In January 2012, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy published an article written by Ehud Yaari<sup>15</sup> called "Sinai: A New Front". The article argues that the Sinai Peninsula has emerged as a new hotspot in the complex Arab-Israeli conflict. With an expanding terrorist infrastructure, the area is becoming another front of potential confrontation with Israel.<sup>16</sup>

Firstly, the article recommends that Egypt should deploy Egyptian military forces along the border, without touching the Camp David Accords. It argues that the use of the decade-old "Agreed Activities Mechanism", concluded privately between Israel and Egypt under the auspices of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO),<sup>17</sup> enables the parties to effectively bypass the peace treaty's prohibition against stationing Egyptian army close to the Israeli boarder. This kind of agreement would have to be concluded individually and for specific periods of time, with the option of renewal.<sup>18</sup>

Secondly, Yaari recommends an increased Egyptian-Israeli coordination, arguing that this will also help the Egyptian military gain a better control over the tunnel smuggling and establish tighter supervision on the type of trade conducted.<sup>19</sup> Thirdly, he proposes that Egypt should use the U.S. aid they receive in two domains: Curbing arms smuggling and revising plans for economic development. Regarding the second domain, the United States (particularly the U.S. Agency for International Development) could support programs aimed at

those Bedouin tribes that are not yet incorporated in the smuggling business nor in the new terrorism networks, to improve mobile clinics and better employment and educational opportunities. Demonstrating that the state cares for the Bedouins needs could go a long way toward convincing them to avoid the risks entailed in smuggling or terrorism.<sup>20</sup>

The article suggests that increased military and security presence and a better cooperation with Israel in this regard, in combination with economic development that includes the Bedouins, could turn the situation around.

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<sup>15</sup> Ehud Yaari is an Israel-based International Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He is also the author of eight books on the Arab-Israeli conflict, including "A Guide to Egypt" (1982). For more information about the Washington Institute, see: <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/>

<sup>16</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front."

<sup>17</sup> "The Multinational Force & Observers (MFO)," *Multinational Force & Observers*, 2009-2012, <http://mfo.org/contingent> (accessed January 21, 2013).

<sup>18</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front."

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p.19.

In September 2012, Nicolas Pelham<sup>21</sup> wrote a report published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House.<sup>22</sup> The report was entitled “Sinai: The Buffer Erodes”. The report examines the attempts by the governments of Egypt, Israel and Gaza to protect what they view as their vital security and commercial interests.

Pelham presents three main proposals that he addresses to the Egyptian government in order to guard against further erosion of regional security. Firstly, the Bedouins should be integrated into the formal structures of Egyptian rule in Sinai, particularly the security forces. Bedouins have traditionally been barred from the military and most security services. Consequently, the Bedouins have lost access the state benefits and job opportunities that accrue from military service. The MFO, one of the province’s largest employers, is by various activists accused of avoiding hiring Bedouins for managerial positions. According to Pelham, recruitment has been in the hands of Care Services Company, which enjoys close ties with Egypt’s security forces. Furthermore, Egyptian positions of governor were typically awarded to retired army and police officers during the Mubarak reign. As a consequence, the south and north-Sinai governors have not been Bedouins. Furthermore, Egypt’s authorities have also prevented Sinai’s tribes from electing their own *mukhtars*, or chiefs, and centrally appointed them instead. To fracture large tribal structures into small social units, they have also appointed tribal chiefs in hundreds of Bedouin villages.<sup>23</sup>

Secondly, according to Pelham, a formalization of trade across Israel, Gaza and Egypt will improve the economic development in Sinai and move illegal activities into the open, making it easier for the government to control them, whilst also providing the inhabitants (especially in the north) with proper jobs and prospects of a viable future. Pelham argues that security for Egypt, Israel and Gaza, can better be achieved by monitoring access and movement of people and goods across the border above ground rather than below it, stating that stability in Sinai and Gaza is intimately linked. Furthermore, the Bedouins’ ties to Gaza are not merely economic,

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<sup>21</sup> Pelham has previously worked as a senior analyst for ICG, and as a consultant for the UN on Gaza’s political economy.

<sup>22</sup> The institute is a world-leading source of independent analysis about significant developments in international affairs. The report is produced in cooperation with TIDA, a centre of studies in Gaza founded by Dr. Eyad Serraj, where Nicolas Pelham is a research director. Read more about Chatham House here: <http://www.chathamhouse.org/>

<sup>23</sup> Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.3.

but also cultural and ideological. To enhance the cooperation between Egypt and Gaza will improve the government's legitimacy among many of the Sinai dwellers, especially the Bedouins.<sup>24</sup>

Thirdly, he argues that a better coordination between Israel, Gaza and Egypt is important in order to establish security in the security vacuum that exists in Sinai today. Pelham states that all three governments are engaged in addressing the salafi threat and they should therefore work to enhance the security coordination between the governments.<sup>25</sup>

What is common for all three texts is that they all presented the Egyptian government with certain recommendations of how to halt, and permanently solve, the radicalization of Sinai, grounded in their understanding of the situation. As there is no published research on this particular subject, I will in this thesis investigate how the FJP, as a part of Egypt's first democratically elected government, perceive and comprehend the situation and to what degree the FJP was planning to follow these recommendations. As all of the abovementioned texts recommend an improved relationship between the government and the Bedouins, I will especially focus on how the FJP's policy would affect the indigenous population of Sinai.

### 1.3 Research Question

This thesis aims to answer whether the FJP represented a shift in policy regarding the Bedouin minority in Sinai, or if the policy would be a continuation of Mubarak's approach to this question. My research question is thus the following: *Did the FJP represent a new policy towards the Bedouins in Sinai?*

Sinai is becoming increasingly radicalized. There is a widespread notion among scholars, as well as in the media, that the perpetrators of most attacks occurring in the peninsula during the last decade are predominantly Bedouins. Although several explanations exist as to *why* the Bedouins are radicalizing, many underline the Mubarak regime's policy towards Sinai and its native inhabitants as an important factor.<sup>26</sup> Mursi won the presidential election in June 2012, and swore in the new Cabinet on August 2 the same year. The FJP had less than a year as part of a government before the military coup on July 3, 2013. During the FJP's time in government, what kind of policy towards Sinai did the FJP plan to lead? Was the FJP

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.10.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p.32.

<sup>26</sup> See *ibid.*; "Egypt's Sinai Question."; Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front."

planning to continue the Mubarak policy, or to undertake a new approach towards this important area? How would the FJP, during its time as part of a new government in a nation state, solve the dilemma of how to deal with a semi-nomadic indigenous minority living in such a geo-strategically important area? Did the FJP represent a new political approach to this minority and how can we understand this policy?

### *1.3.1 A Nation State and Minority Nations*

During the 1800s the idea that each nation had the right to form a state, took form. During the 1800s and much of the 1900s, the nation state increasingly became the dominant political entity. One definition of a *nation* is “a large body of people united by common descent, history, culture, or language, inhabiting a particular state or territory.”<sup>27</sup> The definition of a *nation state* is “a sovereign state of which most of the citizens or subjects are united also by factors, which define a nation (...)”.<sup>28</sup> Iceland and North Korea are two examples where nearly all citizens share the same language and belong to the same ethno-national group, however these are the exceptions. In fact no state in the world is culturally and/or ethnically completely homogenous.

Will Kymlicka, the author of “Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights”, argues that nowadays, all states are either polyethnic states -where the state has received additional ethnic groups through immigration –or multination states- where nations have been voluntarily or involuntarily incorporated into the state, or both. Kymlicka distinguishes between two types of ethno-cultural groups: ethnic groups and minority nations. He separates between these two kinds of minorities, arguing the two groups raises different issues regarding minority rights. Kymlicka notes that immigration is voluntary (he deals separately with the issue of refugees) and argues that immigrants generally wish to integrate into the society and culture that they enter, while minority nations often desire to retain their culture, and often demands some degree of self-government rights.

Kymlicka describes a *minority nation* as a distinct and potentially self-governing society, a group that forms historical community with its own homeland, and share a distinct culture and common language. Kymlicka argues that if a minority wish to retain its culture, it should be recognized as distinct.<sup>29</sup> The

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<sup>27</sup> Nation-state, in *US English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2013).

<sup>28</sup> Nation-stateibid.

<sup>29</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). p.18.

Bedouins, the indigenous people of Sinai, have their own customary laws (*urf*) with social and economic practices that have been inherited throughout generations. Although the Bedouins speak Arabic, they can be clearly distinguished from the Egyptian dialect.<sup>30</sup> The Bedouins identify themselves as a distinct group and are very aware of their historic origins in the area of Saudi-Arabia. They claim to be *ashraf*, meaning that they descend in a straight lineage from the Prophet Muhammad himself.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, they do not share, or have any interest in the Pharaonic heritage common to the populations (Muslim and Christian) of the Nile Valley.<sup>32</sup> After the 2011 revolution, the Bedouins actually established their own self-rule in the Sinai.<sup>33</sup> As the Bedouins have many characteristics of a minority nation, I will in this thesis define them as such. However, the emphasis of the thesis is on investigating how *the FJP* perceive the Bedouins, and what rights they believe the group is entitled to.

The presence of a minority nation within a nation state often leads to disputes over issues like “language rights, regional autonomy, political representation, educational curriculum, land claims, immigrations and nationalization policy, and even national symbols, [...] and public holidays.”<sup>34</sup> In an effort to achieve a homogeneous polity, various modern nation states have tried different approaches towards minorities. Some minorities have been physically extinguished (genocide), while others have been coercively assimilated, forced to adopt the country’s language, religion and so on. A third approach has been to treat the minority as alien residents, subject to physical segregation and economical discrimination and deprived of political rights.<sup>35</sup> More recently, some nation states have given in to demands from minorities, providing them with group-specific rights.<sup>36</sup>

In the beginning of the 1900s, minority rights were based mainly on bilateral agreements. For example, Germany would agree to provide Polish residents within its border with certain rights, as long as Poland did the same for German residents within their border. Minorities were thus depending on the presence of a “kind state” taking an interest in their rights. After World War II, and the persecution of the Jews, it was clear that a new approach to minority rights was needed. Many liberals hoped

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<sup>30</sup> Rudolf De Jong, *A Grammar of the Bedouin Dialects of the Northern Sinai Littoral: Bridging the Linguistic Gap Between the Eastern and Western Arab World* (Leiden: Brill Academic Pub, 2000).

<sup>31</sup> Ned H. Greenwood, *The Sinai, A Physical Geography* (Austin: University of Texas, 1997). p.9.

<sup>32</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question," p.i.

<sup>33</sup> Nicolas Pelham, "Salvaging Sinai," (Oslo: The Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, 2012).

<sup>34</sup> Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*: p.1.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p.2.

<sup>36</sup> See further down for more about polyethnic and special representation rights.



that respect for human rights, realized by guaranteeing basic civil and political rights to all individuals regardless of group membership, would be enough to protect minorities.<sup>37</sup>

Nonetheless, human rights are unable to resolve some of the most important questions concerning minority rights within a nation state, especially regarding minority nations. Should the traditional homelands of indigenous peoples be reserved for their benefit, and thus be protected from encroachment by settlers and resource developers? What are the responsibilities of minorities to integrate? Should governmental powers be decentralized from the central level to more local or regional levels controlled by particular minorities, particularly on culturally sensitive issues?<sup>38</sup> The problem is not that human rights give the wrong answers, but that they do not give any answers at all. Finding morally defensible answers that supplement universal human rights on how to deal with minority rights is one of the greatest challenges facing democracies.<sup>39</sup>

According to Kymlicka, minority groups can demand two kinds of group-specific rights: polyethnic rights and/or self-government rights. Firstly, minorities, both ethnic groups and minority nations, could demand *polyethnic rights* (financial support and legal protection for certain practices associated with the group's culture). Initially, this was simply the right to freely express one's particularity without fear of prejudice or discrimination in the mainstream society. Later on, polyethnic rights also intended to actively help minority groups express their cultural particularity without hindering their success in the economic and political institutions of the majority group's society. For this reason, anti-racism policies are considered part of the "multiculturalism" policy in many countries.<sup>40</sup> An example of a typical demand is the acknowledgement of the minority culture and linguistic tradition, manifested in for example changes to the education curriculum to recognize the history and contribution of minorities. Examples of polyethnic rights are public funding of a minority's cultural practices, the founding of ethnic associations, magazines, festivals, arts and museums, in addition to the funding for ethnic studies and ethnic associations.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*: p.2.

<sup>38</sup> These are just some of the questions posed by Kymlicka.

<sup>39</sup> Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*: p.1.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p.31.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

Secondly, minority nations could demand some degree of *self-government rights* (the delegation of powers to minority nations, often through some form of federalism). Normally they demand some form of political autonomy or regional jurisdiction, in order to ensure the full and free development of their own cultures and the best interests of their people.

Self-government claims, then, typically take the form of devolving political power to a political unit substantially controlled by the members of the national minority, and substantially corresponding to their historical homeland or territory.<sup>42</sup>

If a minority nation perceives that their self-determination is impossible within the larger state, they may wish to secede. After the 2011 revolution, the Bedouins have demanded some degree of self-government rights. Bedouin leaders, unknown perpetrators of various attacks and demonstrators have demanded an end to government appointment of their chiefs (*mukhtar*), state recognition of *urf* rulings (custom) and tribal participation in the restoration of law and order, and decision-making and that the government recognize Bedouins' historical claim to land ownership.<sup>43</sup>

Virtually all modern states have historically adopted nation-building policies seeking the assimilation of the entire population into a common national culture, however, few have succeeded in the making of one uniform national culture.<sup>44</sup> On the other hand:

the nation-building policies adopted by states have been very successful in leading the national majority to conceive the whole territory of the state as their nation. As a result, the majority now thinks of minorities (or at least their historical territory) in a way that minorities themselves reject - that is, as belonging to the dominant nation.<sup>45</sup>

The majority has a nationalist interest in maintaining the unity of the state to avoid losing territory that they perceive as belonging to the dominant majority nation.<sup>46</sup> A study from the early 1990s showed that the single largest cause of ethnic conflict in the world at that time was the struggle by indigenous peoples for the protection of

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p.30.

<sup>43</sup> Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.3.

<sup>44</sup> Josep Costa, "On theories of secession: Minorities, majorities and the multination state," *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 6, no. 2 (2010): pp:67-68.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p.68.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

their land rights.<sup>47</sup> In Sinai, Bedouins have also demanded compensation for the central government's use of what the Bedouins define tribal land.<sup>48</sup>

According to Kymlicka, a liberal government policy towards ethnical minorities should result in the endorsement of self-governing rights for minority nations and polyethnic rights for immigrants (other ethnic groups). The first are intended to enable a nation to govern itself and maintain its own societal culture, while the second offers to help ethnic groups to express their cultural particularity while becoming a full and equal member of the majority culture, in other words, promote integration.<sup>49</sup>

In this thesis I will not give any normative advice to the Egyptian government on how to deal with its minorities. Instead, the purpose of this section is to show the reader what kind of challenges the government (previous and present) is facing and what kind of demands the government can expect from the Bedouins. I will later show that the Mubarak regime treated the Bedouins as alien residents, subjects to physical segregation and economic discrimination, and in some degree denied political rights. More recently, the Bedouins in Sinai have in different manners tried to obtain polyethnic rights and demanded some degree of self-government rights. However, importantly, they are also demanding basic human rights, for example that the government grant citizenship to the more than 100,000 Bedouins who remain noncitizens, provide public services, and various other basic services and infrastructure.<sup>50</sup>

### 1.3.2 Operationalization

To answer my research question on whether or not the FJP represented a new policy towards the Bedouins in Sinai, the question of how the Mubarak regime dealt with the Sinai Bedouins, needs to be addressed. Although most attacks in Sinai are said to have been carried out by Bedouins, there exist various interpretations seeking to explain *why* these Bedouins have radicalized. My sources underlined that a main factor for the current situation in Sinai was the Mubarak regime's policy of neglecting the peninsula and suppressing its native inhabitants. In order to describe the Mubarak regime's policy in Sinai, I have chosen to present different factors

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<sup>47</sup> Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*: p.30.

<sup>48</sup> Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.8.

<sup>49</sup> Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*.

<sup>50</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front," p.8.

seeking to explain why Sinai, and its inhabitants, are radicalizing. In this way, I will show the reader the most common explanations on why the radicalization is occurring, and at the same time show how the previous regime dealt with elements and factors that might have caused the Bedouins to radicalize.

To further investigate the character of the FJP's policy, I will compare their policy to recommendations given by the ICG and Chatham House reports and the Washington Institute article on how to permanently halt the radicalization of Sinai. Embedded in these recommendations was the importance of a radical improvement in the relationship between the Bedouins and the central government. The state should provide the Bedouins with equal rights to other Egyptians, as well as recognize their distinct cultural traditions. As the FJP did not have a single uniform policy towards the Bedouins, I will look at their plan to halt and permanently put an end to the radicalization of Sinai, because this policy would affect the Bedouins. In order to halt the radicalization, the research institutes have combined recommended that the government: (1) implement a comprehensive development plan for the entire Sinai, (2) increase the military and security presence in the peninsula (it was strongly recommended that these forces work in accordance with human rights and the rule of law), and (3) and improve their relationship with Sinai's neighbours Israel and (4) similarly for Gaza. In what way the FJP was planning to follow these four recommendations will also show how the FJP was planning to approach the Bedouin minority. As part of a central government, would the FJP continue to treat the minority as alien residents, subject to segregation and discrimination? Was the FJP planning to use the universal human rights in guiding their policy, or would it provide the Bedouins with group specific rights like self-government rights or polyethnic rights or both?

Following this comparison, there will be a discussion on why the FJP implemented, or failed to implement, a new approach towards this minority. During my time in Cairo, I asked all my sources in the FJP *why* they believe Sinai is radicalizing and *who* they think are responsible, before I asked about their policy in the area. Analysing their answers on these questions will make it easier to understand and explain the party's policy.

## 1.4 Methodological Approach

This thesis is a qualitative study based on material from my fieldwork in Cairo from early September to the end of November 2012. Despite wanting to do parts of my fieldwork in Sinai, I eventually ended up with not going. This decision was made because the Norwegian embassy as well as Egyptian friends advised against travelling to Sinai due to the unstable situation.

My interviews were semi-structured, allowing me to ask some standard questions, while also being able to ask more in-depth question when needed. The thesis is also grounded in primary literature like the FJP statements in their political program, on their own web pages and in the media in general. However, as I could not find many statements about their view on Sinai and the Bedouins, interviewing them was essential in order to conduct my thesis.

I chose to use a qualitative approach because this approach is the most suitable in answering my research question, as the qualitative method investigates the *how* and *why* of decision making, not just what, where, when. The actors in the field are constructing their own reality, and as a researcher it is hard to understand this reality without a flexible methodology.<sup>51</sup> A qualitative research method is a more appropriate tool to gain an “in-depth” understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour.<sup>52</sup>

After two years of Arabic study at the University of Oslo, and an additional one and a half years living in Syria and Egypt, I am competent in Arabic. I conducted three of my interviews in Arabic, and the rest in English. During my Arabic interviews, situations occurred where I had to ask for rephrasing and clarification due to language difficulties. Therefore, on those occasions where it was clear that my informant’s English was better than my Arabic, I conducted the interview in English. Some of my sources did not speak English at all, or felt they expressed themselves better in Arabic, and I believe that my knowledge of the language made them feel more comfortable being interviewed.

Prior to every interview, I told my sources the reason for my interview, and that it would be used in a master’s thesis, so as to not cause any misunderstandings. All of my sources agreed to let me interview them after I had laid out the details of

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<sup>51</sup> *Statsvitenskapelig leksikon*, 2 ed. (Universitetsforlaget, 2007). pp.135-6.

<sup>52</sup> Dennis Howitt, *Introduction to qualitative methods in psychology* (Essex, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2010).

my research. I chose to use a digital recorder during the interviews that enabled me to actively listen, instead of being too engaged in writing. At the beginning of every interview I asked my sources if they wanted to retain their anonymity, however, as expected, most were keen on stating their names and opinions as being a part of a political party.

After the military coup in July 2013, members of the FJP are being detained and arrested, including at least two of my interviewees.<sup>53</sup> This poses the question if I should retain my sources' anonymity after all. However, I have chosen not to do this. I believe there are no answers appearing in this thesis that could incriminate or damage any of my interviewees.

#### *1.4.1 Presentation of Interviewees*

I retrieved information mainly through seven interviews with active members of the FJP, during my fieldwork in Cairo from September to the end of November 2012. As additional background information, I interviewed two Egyptian journalists, both with key knowledge about the situation in Sinai and the political situation in Egypt.

The first person I interviewed was Hilmi al-Gazzar. Al-Gazzar is a senior leader of the MB, and a member of the MB's Shura council, the Brotherhood's leading organ. Hilmi al-Gazzar was at that time also the leader of the FJP in the district of Giza. Being an important figure in the party, he appeared frequently in both Egyptian and international media. Al-Gazzar was one of the leaders of the MB's student movement, *al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya* (GI), in the 1970s together with, among others, Essam al-Erian, now deputy Chairman of the FJP.

Dr. Murad Ali was the media advisor during the parliamentary and presidential election. During the presidential election, he was initially running the campaign for Muhammad Khairat al-Shater, the FJP's initial presidential candidate. However, Shater was disqualified, and Dr. Ali subsequently became the advisor for the recently deposed president Muhammad Mursi.

Ammar Fayad is an active member of FJP and works for the *Ikhwan Web*, the MB official English-language web page, making him informed and updated on the MB's view on the Sinai situation and on FJP's policy. He has been active in the MB

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<sup>53</sup> "Egypt arrests Muslim Brotherhood-linked cleric Safwat Hegazy," *Al-Arabiyya*, August 29, 2013, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/21/Egypt-arrests-Muslim-Brotherhood-linked-cleric-Safwat-Hegazy-.html> (accessed September 9, 2013); "Brotherhood Leader Gazzar and 82 Morsi Supporters Arrested in Kafr El-Sheikh," *Ikhwan Web*, July 6, 2013, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=31103> (accessed September 9, 2013).

for more than a decade. Fayad was also frequently in touch with several leaders in both the MB and the FJP, arguing that this gave him insight as to their views on the Sinai situation.

Ala' Sayyid was during my fieldwork, the leader of the FJP in the area of Mukattam, a suburb located in south-eastern Cairo. Although Sayyid is mostly concerned with local politics, he takes a keen interest in the Sinai issue, and he told me that he served as a soldier in Sinai and that he had experienced the situation first hand.

Waleed al-Haddad is a senior member of the MB and a founding member of the FJP. Al-Haddad works as a coordinator of FJP's Foreign Relationship Committee, functioning as the second in command. The committee was established only months after the founding of the FJP. Waleed was at that time also a member of the Executive Board in the FJP. Al-Haddad worked closely with the leader of the Foreign Relationship Committee, Amr Darrag, who was considered one of the most prominent parliamentary leaders of the FJP during my fieldwork.

Amr Arfan was the FJP's assistant secretary in the area of Mukattam and the head of the Political Communication Secretariat. Arfan is primarily active in local politics, working to improve the relations between the FJP and religious minorities. He was eager to talk about Sinai, and told me that he regularly travelled to al-Arish and other places in the north. Arfan underlined that he had lived with the Bedouins for a longer period of time, and that he was very interested in his party's view on the situation, especially on how they were going to deal with the Bedouins.

Nussiba Ashraf was at the time of my fieldwork, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee and head of the Research Team. Ashraf often functions as a formal representative for the party, both when the party participates at visits abroad and when it receives foreign ambassadors. As a result of this, Ashraf needs to be updated on the party's view on issues that concern foreign visitors, such as the Sinai situation and the FJP's policy on this issue.

I also interviewed Abdelrahman Ayyash. Ayyash was previously a member of the MB, but is currently neither a part of the MB or the FJP. Presently, he holds a position as a journalist with the International Crisis Group, and I interviewed him shortly following his return from an extensive tour of the north of Sinai. I furthermore interviewed the present-day editor of the newspaper: "Egypt Independent", named Lina Attalah. Attalah has written extensively about Sinai,

especially concerning the situation for Bedouins. Being an editor of a national newspaper, Attalah also had a clear view of the current political situation in Sinai and what had happened in the peninsula after the revolution. Both Ayyash and Attalah stated that they regularly travelled in Sinai, and especially in the northern areas. They have interviewed the local population, mostly the Bedouins, on numerous occasions over several years, and these two interviews provided me with valuable insight as to how the Bedouins themselves describe the situation.

## 1.5 Outline of This Thesis

Before I start to analyse whether or not the FJP was planning to lead a new policy towards the Bedouins in Sinai, I will in chapter 2, present a background on Sinai and its population. Following that, I will present a short chronology of the violent incidents that occurred in Sinai from 2004 - 2013, showing the type of attacks that have occurred and who are being targeted. In the same chapter, I will provide selected background information on the MB and the creation of the FJP.

Close to all the sources that I have used, state that the perpetrators of most attacks in Sinai are predominantly Bedouins. There are two main causes that are repeatedly underlined to explain *why* the Bedouins are radicalizing: The Mubarak policy in Sinai and the emergence of a radical Islamist ideology. In chapter 3, I present these two main causes, with all its aspects, in addition to presenting some reinforcing factors that have appeared after the revolution.

In chapter 4, I will present my interviewees' answers to how they view the situation in Sinai. *Who* do the FJP believe are the perpetrators of the different kinds of attacks and *why* do they believe this is happening? What is the FJP's perception of the situation? This will help to better analyse and understand their plan of action towards Sinai, and consequently help to provide a better analysis of the FJP's policy.

During my interviews, I asked my sources in the FJP how the party was planning to tackle the radicalization of Sinai, and I also asked if they had any particular policy towards the Bedouins. In chapter 5, I present my sources answers on these question.

In chapter 6, I compare the Mubarak regime's policy towards Sinai with the FJP's policy. In the light of the recommendations given by the ICG, the Chatham House and the Washington Institute, what are the characteristics of the FJP policy and to what extent was the FJP planning to follow these recommendations? How was



the FJP planning to approach the Bedouin minority? Though the use the universal human rights, or would the party provide the Bedouins with group specific rights like self-government rights or polyethnic rights, or both? Did the FJP represent a new kind of policy?

## 2 Historical and Regional Background

### 2.1 The Sinai Peninsula

One of the most radical and violent groups emerging in the 1970s was *al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya* (GI). The GI consisted of mainly people from Upper Egypt, and practically all of the major terrorist incidents in Egypt during this period occurred in mainland Egypt. Pursuing a violent campaign in the 1990s, GI is said to have been responsible for the killing of hundreds of Egyptian policemen and soldiers, secular intellectuals, Christian Copts, other civilians and dozens of tourists, culminating in the Luxor massacre in 1997 where 68 people were killed, of them 58 foreign tourists.<sup>54</sup> The attack turned the Egyptian *en masse* against armed Islamists and the same year leaders of GI declared a unilateral ceasefire and later dismantled its armed wings.<sup>55</sup> The period from the Luxor attack and up until the Taba attack in 2004, is characterised by virtually no violent Islamist attacks in Egypt, making scholars believe that armed struggle (jihad) against the Egyptian state had effectively been abandoned. However, the Taba attack marked the beginning of a new wave of Islamist violence in Egypt, this time with a change of location, namely Sinai, and a change of the perpetrators identity. The group convicted of the attack was consisting of mostly Bedouins and Egyptian born Palestinians.

#### 2.1.1 Regional Background

With its 61,000 square kilometres the vast, arid areas of the Sinai Peninsula is a link between Africa and Asia.<sup>56</sup> Located with the Gulf of Suez to the west and the Gulf of Aqaba to the east, bounded by the Mediterranean Sea in the north and the Red Sea in the south, Sinai has always been an important geopolitical space.<sup>57</sup> Until quite recently, Sinai served mainly as a formidable “buffer zone” between the Nile Valley and its eastern borders. According to Egyptian analysts, roughly 90 per cent of raids into the country throughout history have come through Sinai.<sup>58</sup> In modern times, several wars have been fought in the area: In 1956, with the nationalization of the

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<sup>54</sup> Lawrence Wright, *The looming tower: al-Qaeda and the road to 9/11* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007); Mohamed Bin-Ali and Rohan Gunaratna, "De-Radicalization Initiatives in Egypt: A Preliminary Insight," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 32, no. 4 (2009): pp.277-91.

<sup>55</sup> Omar Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming armed Islamist movements* (London: Routledge, 2009). p.1.

<sup>56</sup> See map of Sinai in appendix.

<sup>57</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question," p.26.

<sup>58</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front," p.2,

<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyNote09.pdf>.

Suez Canal, the “Six-Day War” in 1967 when Sinai was placed under Israeli control, and the Yom Kippur-war of 1973, during which Egypt sought to restore its sovereignty over the area.<sup>59</sup>

Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin signed the Camp David accords on 17 September 1978. There were two Camp David agreements: “A Framework for Peace in the Middle East” and “A Framework for the Conclusion of a Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel”. The first concerned the rights of the Palestinian people, and the other was an important part of the process leading towards the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty signed in March 1979.<sup>60</sup> Although al-Sadat managed to regain Sinai, which had been occupied during the Yom Kippur War, the peace treaty was not well received by the majority of the Egyptian people. Partly as a reaction to the treaty, a radical Islamist assassinated al-Sadat in 1981.<sup>61</sup> The agreement divided Sinai into three zones that were to be gradually demilitarized. In 1982, the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) was created to guarantee the new “buffer zone” status of Sinai. The mission of this independent international organization is to supervise the implementation of the treaty and to prevent any violation of its terms.<sup>62</sup> The MFO has per 2012, 1,656 military personnel supplied by twelve countries in the demilitarized border zone. In 2005, after Israel’s withdrawal, and in 2007, after Hamas’ electoral victory in Gaza, the MFO’s mandate was expanded to ensure that the augmented Egyptian presence along the Gaza border was consistent with the treaty.<sup>63</sup>

The Sinai is divided into two governorates: North and South Sinai. Although Sinai is almost twice the size of Egypt’s Nile Valley and Delta, the population is estimated to be around 550,000, unevenly distributed. Around 400,000 people live in North Sinai province, and about 145,000 of them, live in or around the provincial capital al-Arish. In the mountainous South Sinai lives a further 165,000 people.<sup>64</sup>

The Bedouins in the two provinces constitute approximately 70 per cent of the Sinai population. Their majority, however, has been reduced by rapid labour migration from the Nile Valley. The migrants, referred to by the Bedouins as “the

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<sup>59</sup> Alberto Siliotti, *Sinai* (Cairo: Cairo Press, 2000). p.31.

<sup>60</sup> Kenneth Stein, *Heroic Diplomacy: Sadat, Kissinger, Carter, Begin, and the Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace* (New York: Routledge, 1999). pp.229-54.

<sup>61</sup> Ashour, *The De-Radicalization of Jihadists: Transforming armed Islamist movements*: p.2.

<sup>62</sup> “The Multinational Force & Observers (MFO)”.

<sup>63</sup> David Schenker, “The MFO Under Fire in Sinai,” *Policywatch* (2012): <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-mfo-under-fire-in-sinai>.

<sup>64</sup> Pelham, “Sinai: The Buffer Erodes,” p.1.

Egyptians”, make up around 10 per cent. Another important minority in Sinai are the Palestinians.<sup>65</sup> There are also about 10 per cent Palestinians, primarily represented in the areas close to the Gaza and Israeli borders such as Shaykh Zuwayid and Rafah.<sup>66</sup>

Historically, Sinai is referred to as the land of the *badu*, or the Bedouins, the people of the desert. The tribes are said to originate from the Arabian Peninsula and the countries of the Levant.<sup>67</sup> They are the largest indigenous group in Egypt, next to the Berbers and the Nubians. In the 1890s, Bedouins in all of Egypt, comprised as much as 10 per cent of the total population, while in 1990 the total number of Bedouins in Egypt ranged between 500 000 and 1 million, less than 1 per cent of the country’s population.<sup>68</sup> Although a minority in the country, the Bedouins are still a majority in Sinai. They are divided amongst roughly 20 tribes with between 500 and 25,000 people each.<sup>69</sup> Along the border region, from north to south, the *Tarabin*, the *Tayaha*, the *Azazma* and the *Ahaywat* are dominant tribes. The three latter also dominate most of central Sinai, whose territories extend as far as Israel and the West Bank. Among the most important in the northeast along the Mediterranean coast, are the *Sawarka* and the *Rumaylat*. They are settled in the al-Arish, Shaykh Zuwayid. To the west, the majority are the *Masa'id*, the *Bayyadiyya* and the *Dawaghra*. In the south, the majority groups are the Tuwara, a confederation of tribes, including the *Alayqa*, *Awlad Sa'id* and *Muzayna*, who live in the Sharm al-Shaykh region, in the mountains of the interior and especially in the Dahab area.<sup>70</sup>

Today, most of the tribes are sedentary, living in territories governed by agreements between the groups in accordance with customary law.<sup>71</sup> The Bedouin identity is very closed linked to religion and tribe belonging. When researchers from the ICG asked Bedouins to define their identity, they answered:

“I am a Muslim, an Arab, a Tarabin Bedouin, from Sinai and from Egypt”, a Bedouin from Nuwayba’ told the Crisis Group (...). “I am a Muslim from the Sawarka tribe (*qabila*), and the

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<sup>65</sup> Although the Palestinians are subject to much of the same discrimination as the Bedouins, this issue will not be addressed in this thesis.

<sup>66</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question," p.10.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p.9.

<sup>68</sup> Solomon A. Dersso, "Egypt: Constitutional, legislative and administrative provisions concerning indigenous peoples," (Geneva: International Labour Organization and African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights, 2009), pp.16-17.

<sup>69</sup> See map of Bedouin tribal configuration in the appendix.

<sup>70</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question," pp.9-10.

<sup>71</sup> Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.1.

Abu Shafi family (‘*aila*), a Bedouin (*badu*), an Arab, and my nationality is Egyptian (*gansiyya misriyya*)”, said an al-Arish resident.

Thus, “the Bedouin identity is no longer expressed in terms of a specific way of life – nomadism – but in terms of belonging to a group that defines itself as such.”<sup>72</sup> The Bedouins have retained their own distinct culture, and even today, they have not adopted the Egyptian dialect of Arabic.<sup>73</sup> The Bedouins claim to be *ashraf*, meaning that they decent in a straight lineage from Muhammad himself.<sup>74</sup> Thus, in many ways, ethnically, historically and linguistically, the indigenous Bedouin population has closer ties to the lands to its east than to its west.<sup>75</sup>

Egypt has, from the year of reunification (1982), considered the Sinai-question as, above all, a matter of population settlement, and has encouraged Egyptians from the Nile Valley to move to Sinai by offering attractive salaries and public sector employment. The migrants are distinguished predominantly by dialect and settlement patterns, they are often settled together according to their village or governorate of origin. The Egyptians are also distinguished by their economic activity, working mostly in the tourism industry.<sup>76</sup>

#### 2.1.2 *The Emergence of Radical Islamism in Sinai (2004-2010)*

The ICG report’s opening line states that: “Terrorism returned to Egypt in 2004 after an absence of seven years with successive attacks and the emergence of a heretofore unknown movement in Sinai.”<sup>77</sup> The period from 2004-2006 is marked by three waves of attacks in Taba (2004), in Sharm al-Shaykh (2005) and in Dahab (2006), causing more than 130 fatalities combined.<sup>78</sup> Prior to 2004, almost all violent incidents associated with Islamist extremism had taken place in mainland Egypt and especially Upper Egypt. The attack in Taba was the first terrorist attack in Sinai and this was also the first time that Bedouins allegedly were the perpetrators.<sup>79</sup>

On October 7, 2004, a truck drove into the lobby of the Taba Hilton Hotel and exploded, killing 31 and wounding approximately 150 people. At a campsite often

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<sup>72</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question," p.10.

<sup>73</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front," p.2.

<sup>74</sup> Greenwood, *The Sinai, A Physical Geography*: p.9.

<sup>75</sup> Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.1.

<sup>76</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question," p.11.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p.i.

<sup>78</sup> MJ Gohel and Sajjan M. Gohel, "Dahab Terrorist Attacks," *Asia-Pacific Foundation International Policy Assessment Group* (2006).

<sup>79</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front."

used by Israelis, two more car-bombings occurred. Of all the 34 who died in the twin bombings (including the perpetrators), 13 were from Israel, two from Italy, one from Russia, and one from the United States. The remaining fatalities were believed to be Egyptians.<sup>80</sup> Short after the attack, the Egyptian government detained and killed several members of a local Bedouin tribe whom they believed to be responsible.<sup>81</sup>

On July 23, 2005, a series of suicide bomb attacks hit the Egyptian resort city of Sharm al-Shaykh, resulting in at least 70 fatalities and wounding between 150 and 200 people.<sup>82</sup> This incident stands as the deadliest terrorist attack in Egypt's history. Although Britons, Germans, Italians, Israelis and Americans were among the fatalities, the majority of the casualties were Egyptians.<sup>83</sup> Again the government detained and killed suspected perpetrators in the northern city al-Arish.<sup>84</sup>

On April 24, 2006, three bombs exploded, this time in Dahab, causing 23 casualties and wounding around 80. It appears that a pair of bombs was detonated at two restaurants and a third at a supermarket. Again the majority of the victims were Egyptians.<sup>85</sup> Two days after the Dahab bombings, the government killed or detained virtually all members of a network that was situated in the northern Sinai, "seemingly ending a wave of terror targeting the tourism industry".<sup>86</sup>

Several previously unknown groups claimed responsibility for the three attacks in Sinai. The Abdullah Azzam Brigades (AAB) was the first group to claim responsibility of the Taba bombings, their statement coming two days after the attack. They also claimed responsibility for the Sharm al-Shaykh attack, however, not for the Dahab attack. Another group, *al-Mujahidin fi-Misr* (MM) claimed that they were behind the Taba attack, but not for the other attacks.<sup>87</sup> *Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya al-Alamiyya* (GIA) claimed the responsibility for all three attacks.

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<sup>80</sup> Gohel and Gohel, "Dahab Terrorist Attacks," p.4.

<sup>81</sup> Lucas Winter, "The Abdullah Azzam Brigades," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 34, no. 11 (2011): p.884.

<sup>82</sup> Gohel and Gohel, "Dahab Terrorist Attacks."; Ely Karmon, "Egypt as a New Front of al-Qaeda " *International Institute of Counter-Terrorism* (2006): <http://www.ict.org.il/Articles/tabid/66/Articlsid/213/Default.aspx>.

<sup>83</sup> Gohel and Gohel, "Dahab Terrorist Attacks."

<sup>84</sup> Winter, "The Abdullah Azzam Brigades," p.884.

<sup>85</sup> Karmon, "Egypt as a New Front of al-Qaeda "; Gohel and Gohel, "Dahab Terrorist Attacks."

<sup>86</sup> Winter, "The Abdullah Azzam Brigades," p.886.

<sup>87</sup> Chris Heffelfinger, "Trends in Egyptian Salafi Activism," (West Point: The Combating Terrorism Center, 2007), p.12.

Ultimately, the Egyptian authority announced that members of *al-Tawhid wal-Jihad* (TWJ), that had claimed responsibility for all three attacks, were the perpetrators.<sup>88</sup>

These three attacks were similar in method as they all used three bombs that targeted civilians. Similarly, all of the attacks took place on or around symbolic dates in Egyptian history. October 6<sup>th</sup> is the anniversary of the army's crossing of the Suez Canal in 1973, while July 23<sup>rd</sup> commemorates the 1952 revolution and April 24<sup>th</sup> is the eve of the anniversary of Israel's 1982 withdrawal from Sinai. These attacks also occurred on or around Jewish holidays. The Taba attack occurred during the Jewish *Sukkot* festival, and the attack in Sharm al-Shaykh occurred one day before the Jewish fast day *Tammuz*, commemorating the breach of the walls of Jerusalem before the destruction of the Second Temple. It falls on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the Hebrew month of Tammuz and in 2005 that date was July 24.<sup>89</sup> The Dahab attack in 2006 coincides with the newest Jewish holiday, *Yom ha-sho'a*, which commemorates Holocaust.<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, it also coincides with *Sham al-Nassim*, an Egyptian national holiday marking the beginning of spring. The holiday dates from the time of the Pharaohs and is celebrated by all the country's religious faiths. Additionally, the Egyptian Copts celebrated Easter on April 23.<sup>91</sup>

This led investigators to believe that *one* group with *one* agenda executed all the attacks, namely the TWJ. The TWJ members were mostly Bedouins and men of Palestinian origin, living in northern Sinai, specifically the al-Arish district.<sup>92</sup>

Owing to the Sinai bombings, the Egyptian state conducted a brutal crackdown in the area, resulting in the imprisonment of thousands of people. Human rights organisations reported that there had been extensive use of arbitrary arrests and torture. Perhaps as a result, there was not a single attack in Sinai in 2007, and less than five attacks from 2008 to the end of 2010.

In November 2008, armed Bedouins in Sinai abducted 25 policemen and briefly held them captive, releasing them the same day.<sup>93</sup> On April 22 and August 2,

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<sup>88</sup> Global Terrorism Database, "Jamaa Al-Islamiya Al-Alamiya/World Islamist Group," (accessed August 8, 2012, <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?perpetrator=202352012>).

<sup>89</sup> "Egypt/Sudan: Refugees And Asylum- Seekers Face Brutal Treatment, Kidnapping for Ransom and Human Trafficking," (London: Amnesty International Publications, 2013).

<sup>90</sup> Jewish Federation, "Ten Year Calendar of Jewish Holy Days," (accessed February 21, 2013, [http://www.jfqc.org/jewish\\_holidays.htm](http://www.jfqc.org/jewish_holidays.htm)).

<sup>91</sup> Chris Zambelis, "Sinai Bombings Mark Latest in Pattern of Symbolic Attacks in Egypt," *Terrorism Focus* 3, no. 17 (2006).

<sup>92</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question," pp.3-5.

<sup>93</sup> "Egyptian Bedouins kidnap 25 policemen in Sinai," *Al-Arabiya News*, November 11, 2008, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2008/11/11/59942.html> (accessed July 16, 2012).

2010, rockets were fired from Sinai towards Eilat in Israel and Aqaba in Jordan. In the first attack no one was injured, however, in the second attack two rockets fell in Aqaba in front of a hotel, killing a Jordanian taxi driver. Israeli media reported that a squad from Hamas' military wing, the *Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades*, was behind the two rocket attacks, though Hamas denied any involvement.<sup>94</sup> On June 27, 2010, unknown perpetrators bombed the pipeline between Egypt and Jordan. One source claims that the perpetrators were a group of Bedouins, consisting of at least a dozen armed fugitives.<sup>95</sup> The attack was reportedly in retaliation for several arrests of female Bedouins some days earlier.<sup>96</sup>

### 2.1.3 After the Revolution (2011-2013)

The Egyptian revolution of 2011, took a different form in Sinai than in the rest of Egypt. Bedouin groups overpowered government forces using arms smuggled from Gaza and Libya. They managed to destroy important security institutions, like the regional headquarters of State Security in al-Arish, and Rafah's passport and permit office – an institution that had restricted Bedouin movement to the tourist resorts in the south.<sup>97</sup> Reportedly, there have been at least 35 violent incidents in the peninsula since early 2011 until August 2012, resulting in the deaths of more than 50 policemen and soldiers.<sup>98</sup> Crime has risen and religious conservatism and sectarian tension also increased. In Sinai there have been attacks on both Christian and Sufi establishments.<sup>99</sup>

On July 29, 2011, Bedouins and police clashed in the city of al-Arish, killing three civilians and three security officers and wounding 19 others. After this clash, pamphlets entitled "Statement from al-Qaida in the Sinai Peninsula" were circulated. The statement called for creating an Islamic emirate in the Sinai, implementing sharia law, shelving the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, halting discrimination against

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<sup>94</sup> "Hamas operatives were responsible for the two rocket attacks on Eilat and Aqaba," *The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center*, August 15, 2010, <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en/article/18048> (accessed September 2, 2012).

<sup>95</sup> "Egypt tightens security around pipeline for Israel-bound gas," *AFP*, June 28, 2010, [http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALEqM5j2aK0v\\_4IxpVzZ9I8kk2pIHbtNAg](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALEqM5j2aK0v_4IxpVzZ9I8kk2pIHbtNAg) (accessed August 8, 2012).

<sup>96</sup> "Sinai: The international gas pipeline that transports gas to Jordan and Syria has been bombed", [in Arabic], *Akhbar al-Arab*, June 28, 2010, <http://www.akhbaralarab.net/index.php/regional/25948-2010-06-28-07-59-55> (accessed August 2, 2012).

<sup>97</sup> Pelham, "Salvaging Sinai."

<sup>98</sup> "In Egypt's chaotic Sinai, militants grow stronger," *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, August 9, 2012, <http://www.asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=1&id=30632> (accessed August 10, 2012).

<sup>99</sup> Jeremy M. Sharp, "Egypt in Transition," (Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2011), p.6.



the Sinai's Bedouin tribes and demanding Egyptian military intervention in support of the Hamas regime in Gaza.<sup>100</sup>

A man named Muhammad Eid Hamid, also known as Muhammad al-Tihi, seem to be involved in several of the more recent terrorist attacks. In addition to being one of the perpetrators in the attack on July 29, 2011, he was also accused of being involved in planning a cross-border attack that occurred on the August 18, 2011, killing 8 Israelis. Al-Tihi is believed to be the leader of a new group established after the revolution, sometimes referred to as *al-Takfir wal-Jihad* (TKWJ).<sup>101</sup> The TKWJ-movement is said to follow al-Qaida ideologically and demands an end to any foreign military and tourist presence in the Sinai Peninsula.<sup>102</sup>

In December 2011, the gas line was blown up for the tenth time that year. A group calling itself *Ansar al-Jihad in the Sinai Peninsula* (AJSP) claimed responsibility in an online message, where it also professed its loyalty to the teachings of "the martyr Osama bin-Laden".<sup>103</sup> Ayman al-Zawahiri, al-Qaida 's new leader, has praised the pipeline bombings. On February 5, 2012, the pipeline was attacked again, and this attack was also claimed by AJSP, saying it was in retaliation for the death of the group's leader, the previously mentioned al-Tihi, who supposedly died under torture on February 3, 2012.<sup>104</sup>

On June 18, 2012, an Israeli construction worker was killed on the Egyptian-Israeli border. A team of Israel Defence Forces (IDF) soldiers quickly responded, killing two of the attackers and causing the others to flee.<sup>105</sup> A group calling itself the *Majlis al-Shura lil-Mujahidin fil-Quds* (MSC) claimed responsibility for the ambush.

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<sup>100</sup> Andrew McGregor, "Has Al-Qaeda Opened A New Chapter In The Sinai Peninsula?," *The Jamestown Foundation*, August 17, 2011, <http://www.jamestown.org> (accessed July 22, 2012).

<sup>101</sup> *Ahram Online*, *BBC News* and the *Daily Star* use the name Al-Takfir wal-Hijra while *Al-Jazeera* uses the name Al-Takfir wal-Jihad. This group have most likely no connection to a group known as *al-Takfir wal-Hijra* operating in mainland Egypt in the 1980s and 1990s, therefore I use the name Al-Takfir wal-Jihad.

<sup>102</sup> "Egypt Detains Islamist Leader In Sinai ", *Eurasia Review*, November 13, 2011, <http://www.eurasiareview.com/13112011-egypt-detains-islamist-leader-in-sinai-accused-of-eilat-attacks/> (July 19, 2012).

<sup>103</sup> "Clashes between the army and saboteurs at Sinai gas plant," *Al-Masy Al-Youm*, January 26, 2012, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/clashes-between-army-and-saboteurs-sinai-gas-plant> (accessed June 25, 2012).

<sup>104</sup> "Jihad group says Sinai blast response to leader's death ", *Ma'an News Agency*, February 5, 2011 <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=457878> (accessed July 19, 2012).

<sup>105</sup> Ryan Jones, "Israel-Egypt border continues to heat up," *Israel Today Magazine*, June 18, 2012, <http://www.israeltoday.co.il/NewsItem/tabid/178/nid/23261/language/en-US/Default.aspx> (accessed June 22, 2012).

The perpetrators included an Egyptian and a Saudi. They reportedly sought revenge for “Muslims’ blood” and dedicated this attack to Ayman al-Zawahri.<sup>106</sup>

On July 22, 2012, the pipeline was blown up for the fifteenth time. The attack was the first to take place after the newly elected President Mursi assumed office, and the first after Egypt terminated the gas deal with Israel. The incident showed that despite the termination of the gas deal, the pipeline was seemingly in use.<sup>107</sup> A new Jihadi group named *Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis* (ABM) reportedly claimed responsibility for this attack in an online video. This group also claim to be a branch of al-Qaida.<sup>108</sup>

Another group calling itself *Ansar al-Haqq* (AH) released a video online, featuring gunmen wearing ski masks training with weapons in the Sinai desert. One of the videos showed the men patrolling the streets of a northern Sinai town, waving assault rifles and grenade launchers. A group calling itself *Jund al-Sharia*, (JS) announced in an online statement in August 2012 that it would wage jihad against “the current tyrant of Egypt (...) until they implement God’s Sharia in the land”.<sup>109</sup> JS made several demands, among them the establishment of Islamic law throughout Egypt, beginning in Sinai, as well as the withdrawal of the MFO peacekeepers in the Peninsula.<sup>110</sup>

The core al-Qaida, lead by al-Zawahiri, has not yet acknowledged any of the above-mentioned groups as official branches of the movement.<sup>111</sup>

On August 5, 2012, armed men, reportedly foreign fighters, attacked two security checkpoints for the Egyptian army, killing 16 Egyptian soldiers. The perpetrators also injured seven others. The attack happened at the Karem Abu Salem crossing in North Sinai - on the border between Egypt and Israel. The gunmen barrelled into Israel in the stolen vehicles and Israeli Air Force struck one vehicle, while the other exploded at the border. It was later reported that six of the attackers had been killed at the border and that 10 people were believed to have carried out the

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<sup>106</sup> Ahmed Eleiba, Hatem Maher, and Sherif Tarek, "Operation Eagle' will not stop until Sinai is terror-free: Egypt's military," *Ahram Online*, August 8, 2012, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/49956/Egypt/Politics-/Operation-Eagle-will-not-stop-until-Sinai-is-terro.aspx> (accessed August 10, 2012).

<sup>107</sup> "Sinai deadly attack reopens peninsula security file," *Al-Arabiya*, August 8, 2012, <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/08/08/231090.html> (accessed August 10, 2012).

<sup>108</sup> Elad Benari, "Al-Qaeda Claims Responsibility for Egypt Pipeline Attacks," *Arutz Sheva*, July 26, 2012, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/158264> (accessed August 1, 2012).

<sup>109</sup> "In Egypt's chaotic Sinai, militants grow stronger".

<sup>110</sup> Bill Roggio, "New jihadist group emerges in the Egyptian Sinai," *The Long War Journal*, August 1, 2012, [http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2012/08/new\\_jihadist\\_group\\_emerges\\_in.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/threat-matrix/archives/2012/08/new_jihadist_group_emerges_in.php) (accessed August 15, 2012).

<sup>111</sup> McGregor, "Has Al-Qaeda Opened A New Chapter In The Sinai Peninsula?".

attack. While the identities of the perpetrators remain unclear, media reports from Egypt and elsewhere have all highlighted local Bedouin involvement.<sup>112</sup> Others have claimed the Palestinian extremist group *Jaish al-Islam* (Army of Islam, AI) was behind the attack, while the group itself has not verified the claim.<sup>113</sup>

In March 2012, around 300 persons identified as Bedouins, armed with automatic rifles, surrounded a MFO base holding hundreds hostage for nearly a week, refusing to allow troops to leave or provisions to enter. Their aim was to pressure the Egyptian government to release five tribesmen facing possible sentences of death or life in prison for their alleged role in the 2005 bombings of the Sharm al-Shaykh.<sup>114</sup> Also in September 2012 the MFO was attacked when dozens of armed men broke into their base and raised the black flag of Jihad. This was in connection to a region-wide protests by salafi groups against an anti-Muslim video by an American filmmaker. The group demanded the withdrawal of MFO forces.<sup>115</sup>

Up until this incident, the SCAF-lead government had not addressed the deterioration of security in Sinai. However, after the attack on August 5, on August 8, the newly instated government under Mursi, announced the Operation Eagle, - a security operation initially designed to secure vital establishments in Sinai- in order to combat the militants, declaring that the operation would not stop until “all terrorist and criminal activity is quashed”.<sup>116</sup> The military operation launched in August was the largest military operation in Sinai since 1973. At least 52 militants were reported killed, over 30 arrested, and tunnels to Gaza were also destroyed. It seemed that the situation calmed down after the military offensive, and between September 2012 and June 2013, only six deadly attacks have taken place, for the most part aimed at the Egyptian security, resulting in less than ten casualties on both sides.<sup>117</sup> On the other

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<sup>112</sup> Tamer Wagih, "Who killed the Egyptian security guards in Sinai?," *Egypt Independent*, August 13, 2012, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/opinion/who-killed-egyptian-security-guards-sinai> (accessed February 28, 2013).

<sup>113</sup> "Egypt vows strong response to Sinai attack," *Al-Jazeera*, August 6, 2012, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/08/20128523429347102.html> (accessed August 6, 2012); Michal Shmulovich, "Egyptian officials: Gazan terrorists were involved in Kerem Shalom attack," *The Times of Israel*, August 8, 2012, <http://www.timesofisrael.com> (accessed January 24, 2013).

<sup>114</sup> Andrew McGregor, "Thirtieth Anniversary of Sinai's Liberation Marked by Libyan Arms, Bedouin Militancy and a Growing Rift with Israel," *Terrorism Monitor* 10, no. 10 (2012); Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.15.

<sup>115</sup> Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.9.

<sup>116</sup> Eleiba, Maher, and Tarek, "Operation Eagle' will not stop until Sinai is terror-free: Egypt's military".

<sup>117</sup> "Copts reportedly fleeing Rafah after death threats," *Egypt Independent*, September 29, 2012, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/copts-reportedly-fleeing-rafah-after-death-threats> (accessed

side, there were close to a dozen kidnappings of tourists by Bedouins demanding the release of relatives from prison. Most of the time, the tourists were released unharmed only hours afterward.<sup>118</sup> Mursi and the FJP have been accused of being “too soft” in their approach to Sinai, allegedly being reluctant to “employ heavy-handed tactics to stop the increasing flow of arms and militants into the peninsula”.<sup>119</sup> Mursi was further accused of being “naive and unfit to rule” because of his approach of “mediation with tribal chiefs, rather than the standard military response”.<sup>120</sup>

After the military coup, the violence has intensified resulting in a spike in clashes between the military and the militants, resulting in at least 130 casualties on both sides.<sup>121</sup> On September 11, 2013, suicide bombers killed at least six soldiers in two separate attacks in Sinai, “as the new government said it was stepping up its crackdown on Islamist militants there and also appeared to be moving against non-Islamist voices of dissent”.<sup>122</sup>

Bedouin leaders and Islamists in the Sinai say locals have been angered by the coup because it brought an end to Egypt’s nascent democracy. Both police commanders and Bedouin leaders agree that the militants are a minority, but say they fear that Sinai’s population may get swept up in the military’s crackdown, escalating the conflict into a wider war, adding that Mursi’s rule offered some respite from the repression, a new kind of freedom. One Bedouin smuggler said: “Nothing happened the year that Mursi was in power,” explaining “Mursi had no control here. But at least he didn’t insult or arrest anyone. When you would pass by the checkpoints, they

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January 22, 2013); “Unidentified gunmen kill Egyptian policeman in Sinai,” *Ahram Online*, April 16, 2013, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/69406/Egypt/Politics-/Unidentified-gunmen-kill-Egyptian-policeman-in-Sin.aspx> (accessed April 18, 2013); International Crisis Group, “Crisis Watch Database,” (accessed September 12, 2013, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/crisiswatch/crisiswatch-database.aspx>).

<sup>118</sup> Pelham, “Sinai: The Buffer Erodes,” p.6.

<sup>119</sup> Sahar Aziz, “Did the Sinai situation doom Morsi?,” *The Daily Star*, September 2, 2013 <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Opinion/Commentary/2013/Sep-02/229577-did-the-sinai-situation-doom-morsi.ashx#axzz2ePeeK3JD> (accessed September 10, 2013).

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> “Sinai, Egypt’s unsolved problem,” *Ahram Online*, July 18, 2013, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/76802.aspx> (accessed September 12, 2013); Mostafa Salem, “25 Soldiers executed in Sinai,” *Daily News*, August 19, 2013, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/2013/08/19/25-soldiers-executed-in-sinai/> (accessed September 12, 2013); “Sinai News,” *Daily News*, September 12, 2013, <http://www.dailynewsegypt.com/tag/sinai/> (accessed September 12, 2013).

<sup>122</sup> David Kirkpatrick, “Militants Kill Soldiers in Sinai, and Egypt’s Military Broadens Its Crackdown,” *The New York Times*, September 11, 2013, [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/12/world/middleeast/militants-kill-soldiers-in-sinai-and-egypts-military-broadens-its-crackdown.html?src=recg&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/12/world/middleeast/militants-kill-soldiers-in-sinai-and-egypts-military-broadens-its-crackdown.html?src=recg&_r=0) (accessed September 12, 2013).

would respect you. Now we're back to the way it was before.”<sup>123</sup> After the coup, the Egyptian security forces have locked down the single bridge that connects the peninsula to the mainland, set up a series of checkpoints, and the Sinai Bedouin say they feel as if the state once again is targeting them.<sup>124</sup>

## 2.2 The Freedom and Justice Party

On February 21, 2011, only ten days after Egypt's previous dictator Hosni Mubarak, was forced to resign due to the popular uprising initiating the Egyptian revolution, the MB announced their intention of founding a political party entitled the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP).<sup>125</sup> As 70 per cent of the FJP founders are active members of the MB, the relationship between the MB and the FJP quickly became an issue that needed resolving. In August 2011, the FJP released a statement clarifying its relationship with the MB, emphasizing that the party is an independent party that shares the same background as the Brotherhood.<sup>126</sup> The statement added that the MB represents the main social base for the party, and is its primary supporter. It thus appears to be some degree of coordination between the party and the MB concerning all the social and political activities.<sup>127</sup> The MB leadership appointed Muhammad Mursi as the party's first Chairman, Essam al-Erian as vice president and Saad al-Katatny as secretary general. The latter was elected the current leader in the party's first open internal elections last October 2012.<sup>128</sup>

### 2.2.1 The Party's Origin: The Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood is usually referred to as the first Islamic organisation in the world and was founded by Hassan al-Banna in 1928.<sup>129</sup> The MB started as a religious social organization, focusing its activities on preaching Islam, teaching the illiterate, setting up hospitals and even launching commercial enterprises. Although originally

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<sup>123</sup> Hauslohner, "In Egypt's Sinai, insurgency taking root".

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> "MB announces establishment of political party: Freedom and Justice," *IkhwanWeb*, February 21, 2011, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=28077&ref=search.php> (accessed January 29, 2013).

<sup>126</sup> "In a Statement, FJP Clarifies Relations With Muslim Brotherhood," *Ikhwan Web*, August 11, 2011, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=28921> (accessed February 8, 2013).

<sup>127</sup> "Egypt's Freedom & Justice Party: to Be or Not to Be Independent," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, June 1, 2011, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/06/01/egypt-s-freedom-justice-party-to-be-or-not-to-be-independent/6b7p> (accessed February 6, 2013).

<sup>128</sup> On 19 October 2012, all leading members, female and male, were invited to cast their vote over the new leader. I was present during the election, and although a clear minority, there were several women present that voted. I also noted that few of the voters seemed to be under the age of thirty-five.

<sup>129</sup> Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). p.8.

an Islamic welfare organization, the MB worked for a reformation of the Egyptian social system, the economic system, as well as the political system along Islamic lines. The MB grew rapidly in popularity and number, and by 1946-1948, it had two thousand branches, and is believed to have had over half a million members and around half a million sympathizers.<sup>130</sup>

The MB's ideology is rooted in the belief that the Islamic community has been in decline since the end of the period of "the four rightly guided caliphs", *al-rashidun* (632-661) that led the Islamic community after the death of the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>131</sup> According to the MB, the caliphs had led the community in line with (the true) Islam and their authority was rooted in the will of the people. The MB's view is that corrupt and authoritarian leaders, Western imperialism and the growing secularism have weakened the Egyptian society. To strengthen Egypt and the role of Islam in the world, the MB believes that it was, and is, necessary to revitalize Islam and strengthen the role of religion in society.<sup>132</sup>

As the MB continued to rise in influence in the 1940s, the organization became more engaged in Egypt's turbulent political life. The organization began to oppose British rule in Egypt and worked for the Palestinian cause.<sup>133</sup> Later, the MB also played a supporting role in the 1952 revolution, eager to be a part of the new political regime. This military *coup d'état* was lead by Gamal Abd al-Nasser, and between 1952-1954 the MB enjoyed a period of tolerance from the new regime and was allowed to continue their activities despite the fact that political parties and organizations were dissolved.<sup>134</sup> In 1954, an assassination attempt directed at president Nasser, supposedly by a MB member, lead to a complete ban of the group. Several key members of the organization were arrested. Over the next few weeks, it was announced that as many as 1,000 members of the MB were arrested. In the succeeding military trial, seven people were sentenced to death.<sup>135</sup>

After this incident, the MB had to go underground, and many of its members went in exile. It was not until Anwar al-Sadat had been instated as a president (in 1971), that the majority of the MB leadership was released from jail and gradually

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid., p.328.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., pp.209-10. Read more about the importance of these caliphs in: John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, 4 ed. (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998).

<sup>132</sup> Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*: pp. 209-11.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p.55.

<sup>134</sup> Bjørn Olav Utvik, *Islamismen* (Oslo: UniPub, 2005). p.97.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

got the chance to work in the Egyptian society as a welfare movement, although still banned as a political party.<sup>136</sup> Umar Tilmisani, who became the MB leader in 1972, publically renounced violence as a strategy.<sup>137</sup>

Following the MB official renouncement of violence, several new radical groups disagreeing with the decision emerged. These new groups were aiming to overthrow the secular regime and establish an Islamic state by means of violence. There are a number of factors that led to the proliferation of radical groups in Egypt and across the Muslim world in the 1970s. Different scholars have identified and stressed different factors, but central for most of them are; the reaction to modernization, Western encroachment, tyrannical rule and corruption by the national elite, gross inequality, poverty and lack of economic development.<sup>138</sup> The MB concerned itself with many of the same causes, however committed to a peaceful method.

Then, in 1981 a violent radical Islamist group assassinated al-Sadat, and the Emergency Law was implemented. Although it was supposed to be effective for only one year, it was operative throughout Mubarak's rule.<sup>139</sup> The law empowered the State Security Investigations apparatus (SSI) to arrest anyone, anytime, without an arrest warrant. The SSI did not have to follow the law regulating criminal procedures in arrests: "protection of general security" was sufficient to justification for arrests.<sup>140</sup> The SSI also had the power to renew detention orders indefinitely without charges. As with other authoritarian regimes, the SSI undertook the role of repressing political opponents and thwarting potential voices of dissidence. A growing number of human rights reports have pointed to the repressive role of the SSI Egyptian politics during the Mubarak regime, in particular, with respect to the extensive use of torture and disappearances. The main SSI target of arrests, detention and torture has been Islamists from different factions, including the MB.<sup>141</sup> After the 9/11, the Egyptian government committed to the "war on terrorism", and started to label any group that

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<sup>136</sup> W.L. Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East*, 2 ed. (Colorado & Oxford: Westview Press, 2000). p.371.

<sup>137</sup> Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, "The Muslim Brotherhood After Mubarak," *Foreign Affairs*, February 3, 2011, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67348/carrie-rosefsky-wickham/the-muslim-brotherhood-after-mubarak> (accessed September 11, 2013).

<sup>138</sup> For a comprehensive study see work of scholars like Olivier Roy, Roel Meijer and John L. Esposito.

<sup>139</sup> Mariz Tadros, "The securitisation of civil society: a case study of NGOs-State Security Investigations (SSI) relations in Egypt," *Conflict, Security & Development* 11, no. 1 (2011): p.83.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., p.82.

threatened status quo as a “terrorist organization,” without any thought to the origins of or reasons for the struggle being waged. Military courts that exclude the right of appeal were created, laws were enacted to restrict freedom of the press and prevent elected Islamists from leading professional associations.<sup>142</sup>

During the Mubarak regime the MB was still denied the right to form a political party. However in 1984, the organisation started to field independent candidates in the Egyptian parliamentary elections, sometimes in coalition with other parties. In both 2000 and 2005, candidates from the MB had relative success despite the arrests and harassment of voters who sympathized with them. In the 2005-elections, it managed to obtain twenty per cent of the seats of the legislature’s Lower House, becoming the largest opposition group in the Assembly’s history predating the 2011 revolution.<sup>143</sup> Many expected the MB to repeat its success in the 2010 parliamentary election. However, the state heavily manipulated this election in favour of the National Democratic Party (NDP). There have been speculations that this action only further resulted in an even bigger popular support for the MB organization.<sup>144</sup>

During the 1990s and 2000s, as the MB became increasingly political, several members of the MB demanded internal reform, pushing for a revision of the MB’s ideology, including its positions on party pluralism and women's rights. There was also criticism directed at the old guard’s monopoly of power within the Brotherhood's Guidance Bureau.<sup>145</sup> From 1994 onwards, the MB published several declarations and statements to clarify their view on several subjects. In 2007, the MB published a draft of a political party platform. The MB still did not have any legal recognition in Egypt and the prospect of legal recognition for a MB-founded party seem distant. However, the platform was a way for the MB leadership to clearly signal what sort of party they would found if allowed to do so. The platform emphasized freedom of religion and expression, pluralistic politics, property rights, women’s enfranchisement, and state sovereignty. On the other side, the content proved to be controversial, also within the MB, as it also called for the establishment

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<sup>142</sup> John L. Esposito, *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). p.93.

<sup>143</sup> As'ad Ghanem and Mohanad Mustafa, "Strategies of electoral participation by Islamic movements: the Muslim Brotherhood and parliamentary elections in Egypt and Jordan," *Contemporary Politics* 17, no. 4 (2011): p.400.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., p.402.

<sup>145</sup> Wickham, "The Muslim Brotherhood After Mubarak".



of a council of elected senior religious scholars, effectively placing the government under the scrutiny of an extra-constitutional entity—a return from more moderate positions previously advocated. This reaction points to an internal disagreement within the MB, a sign of continued different tendencies, which have been present since the 1990s, between a conservative and a reformist wing, and also a generation conflict between the old and the new guard.<sup>146</sup>

### *2.2.2 The Creation of the Freedom and Justice Party*

It appears as if the more moderate tendencies have won precedence in the FJP's program, where the debated issues from the 2007 platform are omitted.<sup>147</sup> The FJP election program of 2011 is 49 pages long in Arabic and 45 pages long in English, and is divided into five chapters.<sup>148</sup> The first chapter is headlined: Urgent Issues, and underline the need to reform Egypt's security system, address the economic situation and fight corruption. Especially the reform of the security forces is underlined:

Re-training and re-qualifying employees in the Police Force through extensive courses on how to best deal with the citizens, living the slogans "The police is in the service of the people" and "A person is innocent until proven guilty", to show their own I.D. cards to citizens and to read the rights of the accuses to him or here, including the right to a lawyer, immediately after arrests (...)<sup>149</sup>

Chapter two addresses the issues of political reform. The program states that the state is based on the principle of citizenship, where all citizens enjoy equal rights and duties guaranteed by law in accordance with the principles of equality and equal opportunities, without discrimination because of religion, colour, gender or race. Here the party also addresses Christians and states that all Egyptians are equal and the importance of safeguarding citizenship rights, and the maintenance of national unity. The term "minorities" is mentioned only once while the "Bedouins" is not mentioned at all. In the media, the FJP has continuously stressed their will to include

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<sup>146</sup> Amr Hamzawy Nathan J. Brown, "The Draft Party Platform of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood: Foray Into Political Integration or Retreat Into Old Positions?," (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008).

<sup>147</sup> See the Arabic version of the program at Slideshare, "The Election Program of the Freedom and Justice Party [in Arabic]," (accessed February 8, 2013, <http://www.slideshare.net/moh2000amed/ss-10359583>). See the English version of the program published at Scribd, "Freedom and Justice Party: Election Program," (accessed February 8, 2013, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/73955131/FJP-Program-En>).

<sup>148</sup> Slideshare, "The Election Program of the Freedom and Justice Party [in Arabic]."; Scribd, "Freedom and Justice Party: Election Program."

<sup>149</sup> Scribd, "Freedom and Justice Party: Election Program."p.7

“all Egyptians”, and frequently point to the party’s initial membership of nearly nine thousand, which included one thousand women and one hundred Copts. The FJP stresses the need for democracy and labels itself a civil party, although Islam remains the party’s chief frame of reference, and religion has a presence throughout its party platform.<sup>150</sup>

In chapter three, which is about social justice, the FJP says the state should secure justice, equality and equal opportunities to all citizens. Their priorities are to address the high cost of living, fight poverty and unemployment, and improve conditions of workers and farmers, people with special needs and pensioners, in addition to addressing the concern of street children.

Chapter four is titled Integrated Development and focuses on a suitable environment, the right to education and the right to health care.<sup>151</sup> This chapter also underline the FJP’s goal to establish national projects with geographical dimensions, giving priority to projects for the development of Sinai.<sup>152</sup> The program emphasizes the need to re-plan urban and population layout in Sinai, “and using Egyptian land, wealth and resources in a scientific and practical approach, to serve national security strategies.”<sup>153</sup> In the program, the FJP argue that the security and safety of Egypt is best achieved through development:

Re-planning urban and population layout of the state in general, and in Sinai in particular, and using Egyptian lands, wealth and resources in a scientific and practical approach, to serve national security strategies.<sup>154</sup>

The last chapter is called Regional Leadership. According to the program, there has been a significant decline of Egypt’s leading role. To regain its prior position as a leading country in the Arab world, the FJP states that it is important to maintain peaceful relations with “all countries, nations and institutions of international regulation, promoting mutual respect and equal relations, and supporting international peace, justice and security.”<sup>155</sup> The program also underlines that Egypt shall respect international law covenants and conventions on human rights. In this section the FJP also affirms “the right of the Palestinian people to liberate their

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<sup>150</sup> See the FJP’s founding statements: <http://www.fjparty.org/view.php?pid=1>

<sup>151</sup> Scribd, "Freedom and Justice Party: Election Program," p.23.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., p.22.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p.31.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.p.36

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p.35.

land”, and that especially Egypt should “aid and support the Palestinian people and the Palestinian resistance against the Zionist usurpers of their homeland”.<sup>156</sup>

After the 2011 revolution, Egypt has completed both a parliamentary and a presidential election. The FJP won a decisive plurality in both houses of parliament during the winter 2011 – 2012 elections.<sup>157</sup> Also in Sinai did the FJP become the biggest party with 39,8 per cent of the votes in South Sinai and 35,3 per cent in North Sinai.<sup>158</sup> Then, two days before the presidential election in June 2012, the parliament was dissolved after the court found the voting system to be unconstitutional. Egyptian parliamentary elections were expected to be held in 2013, but were postponed. On July 8, 2013, Interim President Adly Mansour issued a constitutional declaration in which the year was adjusted to 2014.<sup>159</sup>

In the latter part of May 2012 a presidential election in Egypt was held. Initially the FJP nominated Khairat al-Shater as presidential candidate, a decision supported by the MB. However, Shater was later disqualified, and Muhammad Mursi, who was initially nominated as a backup candidate, emerged as the new contestant. In addition to being the party’s chairman at that point, Mursi had previous experience as a politician, being a Member of Parliament in the People's Assembly of Egypt from 2000 to 2005 as a MB independent candidate.<sup>160</sup> On June 24, 2012, it was declared that Mursi had won the presidential election by a narrow margin over Ahmed Shafik. The commission said Mursi took 51,7 per cent of the vote versus 48,3 per cent for Shafik. This was the first election victory of an Islamist as head of state in the Arab world.<sup>161</sup> After his victory had been announced, Mursi resigned from both the MB and FJP, fulfilling a campaign promise vowing to become a “president of all Egyptians”.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p.36.

<sup>157</sup> "Egypt's Islamist parties win elections to parliament," *BBC News*, January 21, 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-16665748> (accessed February 6, 2013).

<sup>158</sup> Supreme Committee for Elections, "Election Results on Map [in Arabic]," (accessed September 11, 2013, <http://parliament2011.elections.eg/index.php/statistics/lists-results-on-map>).

<sup>159</sup> "Egypt interim president sets timetable for elections, constitution reform," *CBS News*, July 8, 2013, [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-202\\_162-57592741/egypt-interim-president-sets-timetable-for-elections-constitution-reform/](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-202_162-57592741/egypt-interim-president-sets-timetable-for-elections-constitution-reform/) (accessed July 16, 2013).

<sup>160</sup> "Egypt Brotherhood candidate: army wants to retain power," *Al-Akhbar*, April 18, 2012, <http://english.al-akhbar.com/content/presidential-frenzy-after-egypt-bars-10-candidates> (accessed February 7, 2013).

<sup>161</sup> David Kirkpatrick, "Named Egypt's Winner, Islamist Makes History," *The New York Times*, June 24, 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/25/world/middleeast/mohamed-morsi-of-muslim-brotherhood-declared-as-egypts-president.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed February 7, 2013).

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.; "Morsi Left Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party," *RIA Novosti*, June 24, 2012, <http://en.rian.ru/world/20120624/174220973.html> (accessed February 7, 2013).

After June 30, 2012, when Mursi was sworn in as the fifth Egyptian president, the first democratically elected, he appointed Hesham Qandil as Prime Minister. Qandil was sworn in on August 2, 2012. Five of the 35 ministers appointed in the Cabinet, were members of the FJP.<sup>163</sup> On January 5, 2013, ten ministers were changed and after the reshuffle, the number of the FJP members in the Cabinet became eight.<sup>164</sup> Then, again, on May 7, 2013, nine ministers were also changed increasing the number of the FJP members to 12 out of total 35, importantly taking the ministry of finance.<sup>165</sup> One can argue that the FJP was the most potent political party in Egypt post-revolution and pre-military coup. On the other side, the highest-profile ministries: those of the interior, defence, communication and finance, were not occupied by FJP-members, with the exception of finance that was under the FJP for about a month. There were at least seven ministers in the Cabinet with strong ties to the military and the Mubarak regime, including the key minister positions like the ministry of foreign affairs, finance, interior affairs and the ministry of defence.<sup>166</sup>

On June 30, 2013, massive demonstrations were held across Egypt calling for President Mursi's resignation from office. At the same time Mursi- supporters held demonstrations elsewhere in Cairo. On July 3, 2013, Abdul Fatah al-Sisi announced a road map for the future, stating that Mursi was removed and that the head of the Constitutional Court had been appointed the Interim President of Egypt.

### 3 Explaining the Sinai Radicalization

In the first chapter, I presented several policy recommendations that the ICG, the Chatham House and the Washington Institute address to the Egyptian government. The recommendations are grounded on research seeking to explain the radicalization. The researchers underlined different aspects of the situation as important to explain its emergence. However, all of them, in various degrees, blamed the Mubarak regime's policy for the Sinai insurgency. In this chapter, I will present the different

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<sup>163</sup> "The Brothers of the Cabinet," *Egypt Independent*, August 10, 2012, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/brothers-cabinet> (accessed September 11, 2013).

<sup>164</sup> Mahmoud Fouly, "Egypt's 10-minister cabinet reshuffle meets with opposition dissatisfaction," *Xinhua*, January 1, 2013, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-01/07/c\\_132084440.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-01/07/c_132084440.htm) (accessed September 11, 2013).

<sup>165</sup> Gamal Essam El-Din, "A disappointing reshuffle," *Al-Ahram*, May 7, 2013, <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/News/2510/17/A-disappointing-reshuffle.aspx> (accessed September 11, 2013).

<sup>166</sup> Sarah Sirgany, "Egypt Cabinet ministers sworn in," *CNN*, August 2, 2012, <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/08/02/world/africa/egypt-cabinet/index.html> (accessed October 2, 2013).

explanations as to why Sinai is radicalizing based on the above-mentioned research, supplemented by explanations visible in other research and in the media.

These explanations seek to identify the perpetrators of the various attacks and the motives behind these actions. As most sources argue that the perpetrators of the various attacks in Sinai from 2004 to 2013 are *predominantly*, local Bedouins, I have divided this chapter into sections that underline what have caused the perpetrators to rebel, while also addressing the issue of the perpetrators identity.

### 3.1 The Policy of the Mubarak Regime

Awaiting Israel's withdrawal from the peninsula in 1982, the local population expected the Egyptian authority to invest in and develop Sinai. President Anwar al-Sadat had ambitious plans for the development of the peninsula. The plan consisted of settling no less than 5 million people in the peninsula, to bring fresh water from the Nile all the way up to the Israeli border and he also marked some 643,000 acres for irrigation and agricultural cultivation in different parts of the desert. However, the assassination of al-Sadat in 1981 put his plans on hold.<sup>167</sup>

#### 3.1.1 Neglect and Lack of Development

In 1994, president Mubarak revised the Sinai development plan, reducing the settlement plans to 2,9 million Egyptians in the peninsula by 2018. Although the settlement numbers were reduced, the plan would, if successfully implemented, still turn the indigenous Bedouin into a small minority. Approximately 75 billion Egyptian pounds were allocated for the plan, which aimed to further develop local mineral resources in addition to increase the area of cultivated lands. However, Mubarak's closest advisors convinced him to give up the Sinai project in favour of the Toshka Project, aimed at creating a "second Nile Valley" in southern Egypt. By 1997, the peninsula had returned to the bottom of the government's priorities list.<sup>168</sup>

Despite the fact that the government did not reach its "population goal" the tourism industry has unquestionably been a successful and strategic economic activity in the region's development. In 2003, South Sinai was attracting over 2,6 million tourists annually, and tens of thousands Egyptians moved there attracted by job prospects and internal tourism, including time-share holiday homes.<sup>169</sup> As a

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<sup>167</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front," pp.10-11.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., pp.11-12.

<sup>169</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question," p.13; Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.17.

consequence, south Sinai has the second highest income level of Egypt's 26 provinces, unemployment is low and literacy is above the national average, most of this owing to its tourism and oil production.<sup>170</sup> However, there are big inequalities in the distribution of capital accumulated as a result of this industry. As the Nile Valley migrants are being systematically favoured, this wealth has not trickled down to the local population.<sup>171</sup>

The North governorate, where the majority of the Sinai population live, is one of Egypt's poorest governorates, and water is a crucial problem.<sup>172</sup> In the least developed areas, schools can be as much as five kilometres away and in most areas, there is a lack of basic infrastructure, like proper roads, water supply and electricity grids. For many in central Sinai, the closest hospitals are over 400 kilometres away.<sup>173</sup> In all of Sinai, there are few educational opportunities, only one private university in Sinai with high tuition fees.<sup>174</sup>

### *3.1.2 Discrimination and Suppression*

The Bedouins have not just been subject to neglect, but also to discrimination and suppression. The ICG report states that the minorities in Sinai are

socially, culturally and economically discriminated against and constrained, on a daily basis, by security measures: in the north, because of the problematic border with Gaza and, in the south, in order to protect foreign tourists.<sup>175</sup>

Some of the most important issues are the dispossession of traditional Bedouin land and the denial of Bedouin ownership rights, the barring of Bedouins from the military and most security services, and the continued undermining of their distinct culture as the government promote the Pharaonic heritage at the expense of the Bedouin traditions. In Pelham quotes a female Bedouin from North Sinai saying: "We're always hearing about terror cells in Sinai bent on destroying the country, but the cause of the violence is popular. If I am not given my equal rights, I will

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<sup>170</sup> Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.1.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question."

<sup>173</sup> Nada El-Kouny, "Egypt's Sinai Peninsula: From liberation to neglect," *Al-Ahram*, April 25, 2013, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/70048/Egypt/Politics-/Egypts-Sinai-Peninsula-From-liberation-to-neglect.aspx> (accessed September 13, 2013).

<sup>174</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question."; Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front."; "Sinai University," <http://www.su.edu.eg/> (accessed October 18, 2013).

<sup>175</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question," p.24.

explode.”<sup>176</sup> Various Bedouin leaders, demonstrators and unknown perpetrator of attacks, have demanded that the government should grant citizenship to the more than 100,000 Bedouin who remain noncitizens, provide public services, and various other basic services and infrastructure, in addition to abolishing the list of 10,000 “wanted” tribesmen (many of whom were sentenced *in absentia*) and to release detained Bedouins.<sup>177</sup>

Customary laws, applied by Bedouin families that have been urbanized and settled for several generations, essentially govern land ownership in Sinai. The principle of *wad'a al-yad* (meaning ‘to put down you hand’) gives de facto property rights to a tribe, family or one of its members who settles on virgin land.<sup>178</sup> However, the land is not property and gives no inheritance rights.<sup>179</sup> In 1988, a law that initially was meant to permit private ownership in the peninsula basically made the whole Sinai government property.<sup>180</sup> The law had a devastating effect on the Bedouins as their land claims were not legally recognized, and they were subsequently displaced from areas of interest, especially along the costal strip, with no government compensation.<sup>181</sup> The Egyptian government was in need of a new tourist location, as the Nile Valley from 1992 to 1994, experienced a drastic fall in tourist revenues caused by repeatedly terrorist attacks by the JI. The private sector was encouraged to invest as the government was selling land at one dollar per sq. metre, but rarely was land sold to any Bedouins.<sup>182</sup> The ICG report states: “During the last fifteen years, all building plots have been allocated to Egyptian and foreign companies investing in tourism”.<sup>183</sup> The Bedouin tribes have been pushed from the southern coast into the hinterland and was hindered from taking part in the new economically development. In the north, the development projects including the construction of an industrial zone, the opening of agro-businesses and the laying of the gas pipeline to Israel and Jordan, are also perceived as a means to repossess Bedouin land while sharing few, if

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<sup>176</sup> Nicolas Pelham, "In Sinai: The Uprising of the Bedouin," *The New York Review of Books*, November 14, 2012, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012/dec/06/sinai-uprising-bedouin/?pagination=false> (accessed February 21, 2013).

<sup>177</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front," p.8.

<sup>178</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question," p.14.

<sup>179</sup> Intervju Ala Sayed

<sup>180</sup> Smadar Lavie, *The Poetics of Military Occupation: Mzeina Allegories of Bedouin Identity Under Israeli and Egyptian Rule* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991). pp.73-76.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., pp.76.

<sup>182</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question."

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., p.13.

any, of the benefits.<sup>184</sup> The re-population project became a way to solve unemployment and housing issues in the urban centre.<sup>185</sup> Another reason for not granting the Bedouins landownership rights was concerns among state officials that the Bedouins would sell the land to Israelis that would use “their greater purchasing power to secure control of land in Egypt’s strategic land-bridge to Asia.”<sup>186</sup> During the last couple of years, the Bedouins have started to demand compensation for state use of land considered by the Bedouins to be “tribal land”.<sup>187</sup>

Conscription is compulsory in Egypt for males of ages between 18 and 30 years. They are however excused from service if they do not have male siblings or hold a dual citizenship. Most Bedouins received Egyptian citizenship in 1906, resulting in the transfer of Sinai to the Egyptian government, however, many have dual citizenship, and around 100,000 of the Bedouin population, do not hold any kind of citizenship, meaning that they are not conscribed to the army, and that they cannot vote.<sup>188</sup> In practise, most Bedouins were barred from the military and most security services. Pelham states that while they were “spared Egypt’s military draft, they lost access to the state benefits and job opportunities that accrued from military service”.<sup>189</sup> It was not until September 2011, Egypt’s military training college in Cairo began accepting Bedouin recruits from Sinai. Additionally, the police and security chiefs in Sinai mostly consist of people from mainland Egypt. Consequently, many Sinai residents say they feel the presence of the military and the police as an occupation similar to the Israeli occupation between 1967 and 1982.<sup>190</sup> Bedouin activists complain that although the north Sinai base of the MFO is one of the province’s largest employers, they avoid the hire of Bedouin for managerial positions.<sup>191</sup>

The Mubarak regime’s declared intention to “Egyptianize” the region; “not only in economic and demographic terms but also, symbolically, in cultural and identity terms” has not helped to alleviate the tension between the government and

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid., p.2; Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes."

<sup>185</sup> Ahmed Mounir Soliman, *A Possible Way Out: Formalizing Housing Informality in Egyptian Cities* (Oxford: University Press of America 2004).

<sup>186</sup> Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.2.

<sup>187</sup> Pelham, "Salvaging Sinai."

<sup>188</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front," p.8.

<sup>189</sup> Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.3.

<sup>190</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front."

<sup>191</sup> See Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes." for more detailed examples.



the local populations.<sup>192</sup> As Kymlicka has pointed out, minorities are often in conflict with majorities over schooling curriculum, as this often leads to conflict between regional culture and national history. This is also the case in Sinai, where non-Bedouin generally teach history “with a perspective in which the Pharaonic heritage is officially assumed as being constitutive of the Egyptian nation”.<sup>193</sup> At the beginning of the 1990s, a group in al-Arish, in northern Sinai, mobilized to create a Bedouin Heritage Museum to house a documentation and research centre on Bedouin culture. The museum revived an interest in the Bedouin heritage, and launched different projects to develop and promote regional Bedouin crafts (mainly embroidery and carpets). It had the support of several donors (notably Swiss and Dutch). In 2003, the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) and the governor of North Sinai decided to create another museum, in the same town as the Bedouins museum was located, sponsored by the Egyptian government with a budget of 47 million Egyptian pounds. In al-Arish cultural activities are in short supplies and so the project would have been an interesting initiative. However, the new museum did not include a “local arts and traditional crafts” section, and displayed only Nabathaeen, Semitic and Pharaonic antiques. Furthermore, it threatened closure of the Bedouin Heritage Museum and its research centre.<sup>194</sup> The ICG report stated, “The fate of this museum exemplifies the implementation of a centralist, authoritarian vision of the Egyptian government that generally ignores the special characteristics of its provinces.”<sup>195</sup> This is also an example of not providing a minority with founding’s so they could preserve certain practices associated with the group, and thus not providing them with polyethnic rights.

Another issue the Bedouins are raising is the central Cairo government’s interference in determining Bedouin parliamentary representatives and even local shaykhs (tribal leaders).<sup>196</sup>

Egypt’s authorities further perceived tribal loyalties as a threat to national ones. Attempting to subvert these, governors prevented Sinai’s tribes from electing their own *mukhtars*, or chiefs,

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<sup>192</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question," p.19.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., p.20.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., p.19.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front," p.8.

and appointed them instead. They further sought to fracture large tribal structures into small social units by appointing tribal chiefs in hundreds of Bedouin villages.<sup>197</sup>

After the revolution of 2011, some Bedouins have demanded that the government recognise *urf* (custom) rulings.<sup>198</sup> Today there exists at least six “Sharia committees” currently operating in North Sinai, each staffed by around five tribal leaders known as shaykhs. Their activities have intensified dramatically since the revolution, as the already dysfunctional state security apparatus struggles to contain rampant lawlessness. Most of the shaykhs have no formal legal training. Although operating in unexpected places like basements and even daycare centers afterhours, the cases they handle are just as serious as those adjudicated by the official justice system.<sup>199</sup>

In order to explain these three initial terrorist attacks from 2004-2006, Egyptian and international NGOs have focused on the human rights violations, which have been prominent in police procedures in Sinai. The ICG report argues that the reason for why the TWJ carried out the three bombings in Sinai from 2004 to 2006 was not primarily their radical Islamic ideology, but a more parochial grievance towards the Egyptian nation state.<sup>200</sup> Some argue that the Sharm al-Shaykh attack was directed specifically at President Mubarak, “given the resort’s role as the main venue for summit conferences and the president’s frequent personal use of it” in revenge for the regime’s neglect and suppression of the people of Sinai.<sup>201</sup> Because of the emergency law in Egypt, the State Security Investigation service (SSI) and the local polices’ power were extended, providing them with similar rights to those of the military. Following the investigation of the Taba attack, the SSI arrested over three thousand persons, including several hundred persons detained solely to secure the surrender of wanted family members. They detained persons without informing them of the reasons for their detention, usually picked up in their homes. Human Rights Watch interviewed several former detainees who provided credible accounts of torture they underwent at the hands of SSI interrogators.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.3.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., p.8.

<sup>199</sup> Mara Revkin, "Islamic justice in the Sinai," *The Middle East Channel*, January 11, 2013, [http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/01/11/islamic\\_justice\\_in\\_the\\_sinai](http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/01/11/islamic_justice_in_the_sinai) (accessed June 2, 2013).

<sup>200</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question."; Winter, "The Abdullah Azzam Brigades," p.886.

<sup>201</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question."

<sup>202</sup> "Egypt: Mass Arrests and Torture in Sinai."

Concerning the frequent kidnappings of foreign tourists, these incidents are often seen as a direct response to the treatment of the Bedouins following the Taba attack. The victims of the kidnappings are often used to push for the release of tribesmen from jail, sometimes in addition to claiming ransom.<sup>203</sup> Most of the time the tourists are treated well and released unharmed, able to describe their abductors.<sup>204</sup> The radicalization of Sinai was treated only as a security issue by the Mubarak regime, without considering, at least not doing anything, about the difficult economical situation of the native population in the peninsula.

The Chatham House report indicates that many Bedouins have been forced into an illegitimate industry:

Excluded from key formal economic sectors, such as tourism or authorized land-cultivation, the indigenous population gravitated towards unlicensed tourism services, cannabis and opium cultivation, arms-running and smuggling, both into Israel and to Gaza.<sup>205</sup>

After Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005, the volume of illegal trade and arms smuggling rose to new heights, escalating further after Hamas took over Gaza in 2007 and Egypt and Israel closed the borders. All of this brought unprecedented prosperity to many Bedouins.<sup>206</sup> The growth of supply routes via tunnels between Gaza and Sinai led to common interests between Bedouin traders, transporters and tunnel owners and Gaza's consumers. By 2009, the smuggling to Gaza had become Sinai's chief economic revenue and in 2010, Sinai had replaced Israel as Gaza's prime portal for food, fuel and other essentials.<sup>207</sup> Gaza's trade tie to Sinai was rooted in ideology and kinship as well as economic necessity. Also an informal trade with Israel has helped to boost the economy. The Bedouins are trading drugs cultivated in Sinai, and also foreign workers and prostitutes from primarily Eastern Europe and also, more recently from the Horn of Africa. There have also been

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<sup>203</sup> "Bedouin release two kidnapped UK tourists in Sinai," *Egypt Independent*, March 7, 2013, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/breaking-bedouin-release-two-kidnapped-uk-tourists-sinai> (accessed September 15, 2013).

<sup>204</sup> In contrast to kidnapping and human trafficking involving Sudanese and Eritreans. See: "Egypt/Sudan: Refugees And Asylum- Seekers Face Brutal Treatment, Kidnapping for Ransom and Human Trafficking." I did not ask about this kind of kidnappings and human trafficking during my interviews as I was not aware of the issue at the time.

<sup>205</sup> Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.3.

<sup>206</sup> "In Egypt's chaotic Sinai, militants grow stronger".

<sup>207</sup> Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.4.

reports that Bedouins the last couple of years have expanded their business into harvesting human organs to be sold abroad.<sup>208</sup>

According to Yaari, the smuggling to Gaza has been allowed to proceed without interruption during the reign of Mubarak stating, "The weekly closures of two or three tunnels have not impaired the scope of illegal trade".<sup>209</sup> Israeli military officers cited "insufficient human intelligence; suspected bribery, especially among low-level soldiers, and lack of political will".<sup>210</sup> However, in 2011, Egypt began sealing a series of smugglers' tunnels and since the beginning of August 2012, the Egyptian army has increased its deployment along its border. Following the military coup, the Egyptian army has destroyed many of the tunnels, however, without offering any alternative economy. Additionally, Israel's new defensive measure completed in January 2013; the construction of a 240-kilometer double fence along the border to Sinai is also destroying a vital informal industry for many Bedouins.<sup>211</sup> These actions may have promoted the Bedouins to escalate their violent activities in order to salvage their income.<sup>212</sup>

### 3.2 The Emergence of a New Radical Ideology

An explanation prevalent in the media is that the radicalization of Sinai is caused by the infiltration of foreign groups that seek shelter in Sinai because of its favourable geography and lack of government security, some even claimed that core al-Qaida has infiltrated Sinai. This explanation stems from the theories surrounding the first three terrorist attacks in the peninsula. Initially, it was assumed that Israeli tourists were the main targets of the attacks in 2004-2006 and therefore, these attacks were partly attributed to al-Qaida.<sup>213</sup> In an audiotape, released on March 4, 2004, the al-Qaida leader, al-Zawahiri, called for attacks on "Israel and the American crusaders".<sup>214</sup> Later this theory was dismissed owing to reports from the initial investigation asserting there had not turned up any evidence of the perpetrators

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<sup>208</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front," p.14.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question," p.7.

<sup>211</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front," p.15.

<sup>212</sup> Pelham, "In Sinai: The Uprising of the Bedouin".

<sup>213</sup> Winter, "The Abdullah Azzam Brigades."; Stephen Ulph, "Clashes in Egypt with Sinai Bedouin Mujahideen," *Terrorism Focus* 2, no. 18 (2005).

<sup>214</sup> Muhammad al-Shafi'i, "Egyptian Islamists React to Sinai Bombings, Link Them to Al-Zawahiri's Tape " *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, October 9, 2004, <http://www.aawsat.com/default.asp?myday=9&mymonth=10&myyear=2004&I2.x=16&I2.y=14> (accessed June 25, 2012).

having received training in Afghanistan or Pakistan. Nor were there any clear indications of logistic activities on behalf of the cell in Muslim communities in Europe, nor any outside financing and no direct ties to al-Qaida or its former leader, Osama bin-Laden.<sup>215</sup> However, this explanation is still very much intact. Scholars have claimed that the sophistication and deadliness of some of the attacks in Sinai “at least hints at some degree of foreign assistance.”<sup>216</sup> The Egyptian government’s downplay of any foreign dimension involved is explained as natural because acknowledging the presence of the notorious al-Qaida would potentially cause a crisis in their tourist economy if acknowledging the presence of the notorious al-Qaida.<sup>217</sup> Also the names of the new groups claiming to be carrying out different terrorist attacks may indicate an al-Qaida presence.<sup>218</sup>

On the other hand, core al-Qaida has not publically sanctioned any of the Sinai groups as officially branches of the movement. Most of the different groups that have claimed responsibility for attacks in the area during the last decade appear to originate in Sinai. They all seem to be newly established groups, apparently consisting of smaller units or cells, far less organized and structured than prior groups in Egypt like the JL.

The Washington Institute article states that Salafi doctrines were imported to Sinai in the 1980s by Bedouin students returning from universities in the Egyptian Delta, especially from Zaqaziq, as well as tribesmen who had spend years working in Saudi Arabia. Zaqaziq is known as a local stronghold of Islamist radicals. The new Salafi associations were initially based in north Sinai in addition to a few smaller villages in the central region. Clashes between groups adhering to the new Salafi doctrines and groups belonging to previously established Sufi orders in the 1990s, led to splits within tribal and family units eroding the traditional hierarchy. Moreover, the large-scale smuggling networks further eroded the traditional hierarchy, transferring actual authority from tribal elders to Islamists and gang leaders. The article claims that the relatively recent emergence of radical Islamist

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<sup>215</sup> Daniel Williams, "Egypt Gets Tough in Sinai In Wake of Resort Attacks," *The Washington Post*, October 2, 2012, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/01/AR2005100101293\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/01/AR2005100101293_pf.html) (accessed June 25, 2012).

<sup>216</sup> Winter, "The Abdullah Azzam Brigades," p.886.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Al-Qaida in the Sinai Peninsula (AQSP), Abdullah Azzam Brigades-Al-Qaida in the land of Kinana (AAB), *Ansar al-Jihad in the Sinai Peninsula* (AJSP), *Majlis al-Shura lil-Mujahidin fil-Quds* (MSC) and *Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis* (ABM).

groups in the peninsula is an unprecedented development that departs from longstanding Bedouin traditions that challenges tribal hierarchy.<sup>219</sup>

What however is clear when analysing the targets of attack and statements from groups claiming to be responsible, is that the perpetrators definitely share the al-Qaida ideology. Al-Zawahiri has praised many of the attacks in Sinai, especially the bombing of the pipeline to Israel and during the last decade. Moreover, both Christians and Sufis in Sinai have been targeted. There have been examples of Egyptian Christians moving from their hometowns in Sinai, in fear of their life after receiving threats from radical Islamists. Some supposedly see the Christians as an obstacle for implementing what they define as a sharia state.<sup>220</sup> Also a Sufi shrine in Shaykh Zuwayid has repeatedly been attacked, until it was destroyed in 2012. Some radical Islamists believe that Sufi shrines are a form of idolatry, and this may have prompted some Salafis to attack the shrine.<sup>221</sup>

Israeli scholars, and especially Israeli media, have claimed that Hamas has infiltrated Sinai and is using the area to exercise proxy warfare. Some stress that Egyptian-born Palestinians and Palestinians coming from Gaza are responsible for several attacks, underlining that they probably are cooperating with the local Bedouins. In this case, the chief motive is the anti-Israel ideology prevalent among many Palestinians and Bedouins. Islamic Jihad and other Palestinian organisations are accused of having run various clandestine activities in Sinai, especially in the Rafah and al-Arish area, since the beginning in the 1990s.<sup>222</sup> The long history between Gaza and Sinai of commercial exchanges, tribal and family structures and military administration (Egypt from 1949 to 1967, Israel from 1967 to 1982) build strong solidarity networks across the border.<sup>223</sup> Up to a third of Gaza's population has Bedouin roots, and Gaza born persons of Bedouin origin rank prominently in the Hamas leadership. "Ethnically, historically and linguistically, the indigenous Bedouin population has closer ties to the lands to its east than to its west," Pelham states in an article from 2012, where he include a statement from a Bedouin tribal leader situated in the north of Sinai saying: "Our language and our traditions are the

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<sup>219</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front," p.5.

<sup>220</sup> "Copts reportedly fleeing Rafah after death threats".

<sup>221</sup> Egypt Independent, "Sufi mausoleum attacked for third time in North Sinai," *Egypt Independent*, June 14, 2012, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/sufi-mausoleum-attacked-third-time-north-sinai> (accessed January 23, 2013); Pelham, "In Sinai: The Uprising of the Bedouin".

<sup>222</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front."

<sup>223</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question," p.21.

same as Gaza's. We're 40 kilometres from Rafah, and 200 kilometres from Cairo."<sup>224</sup> Many of the tribes in Sinai have relatives living in Gaza and Israel. The strong Palestinian presence, especially in the border towns like al-Arish and Rafah, reinforces links to the northeast. The ICG report maintains that a comprehensive and lasting resolution of the Sinai question can only be achieved in the context of a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

There is good reason to believe that many of the attacks in Sinai are linked to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, however, not necessarily the work of a Palestinian faction. This has been a valid argument ever since a member of TWJ, Muhammad Abdullah Abu Garir, stated in his confession after the Taba bombing, that the objective was "to kill Israelis and Americans in revenge for Palestinian victims of the *intifada* (uprising). It was not the intention to harm other Muslims."<sup>225</sup> However, it is not surprising that Garir denied that TWJ deliberately targeted Egyptians. After all, he was tried in an Egyptian court. Nevertheless, this leaves unexplained why Egyptians were the majority of the casualties in all three attacks in 2004, 2005 and 2006.<sup>226</sup>

### **3.3 Reinforcing Factor: The Egyptian Revolution 2011**

From 2011 and onwards, several factors, directly or indirectly connected to the Arab Spring, have contributed further in making Sinai a "terrorist haven". In the first months of the revolution, military personnel in Sinai was redirected to Cairo and other cities in an effort to control the situation there, while Sinai was left unprotected. Concurrently, the Bedouins overpowered the government forces and established in its absence a Bedouin self-rule spread across the peninsula. The Sinai tribes established

their own security committees to police the peninsula, legal committees (*lijan al-islam*) to adjudicate local disputes – based on a combination of tribal practice and Islamic law – and economic committees to raise revenues by taxing proceeds from smuggling and operating a rudimentary tax regime-cum-protection racket.<sup>227</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.1.

<sup>225</sup> "Egypt's Sinai Question," p.2.

<sup>226</sup> Gohel and Gohel, "Dahab Terrorist Attacks," p.4.

<sup>227</sup> Pelham, "Salvaging Sinai," p.3.

The TKWJ- group announced in the summer of 2011, the establishment of an Islamic state of Sinai. Mixing jihadi with local separatist rhetoric, they distributed leaflets declared an Islamic emirate in Sinai and ordained the implementation of Sharia law.

Also the opening of the Gaza border from May to August 2012 may have resulted in a growing number of terrorist networks affiliating with Palestinian organizations like the AI, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC) infiltrating Sinai and attacking Israel from the peninsula.<sup>228</sup>

In a massive series of prison breakouts in January 2011, many radical Islamists, among them people accused of being responsible for the Sinai bombing in 2004-2006, managed to escape. Some of them returned to Sinai, probably even more radicalized after years in Egyptian prisons. This may also have affected the security situation in Sinai.<sup>229</sup>

### ***Explaining the radicalization of Sinai***

In this chapter, I have presented different explanations as to why Sinai is radicalizing. In the first explanation, the researchers identify the local population, predominantly the Bedouins, as the perpetrators of most of the attacks occurring in Sinai. The neglect of Sinai and the discrimination and suppression of its inhabitants by the Mubarak regime, are underlined as important factors for the radicalization. Attacks that could fit this explanation are the repeated attacks targeting Egyptian military and security, border guards (Israeli and Egyptian) and the MFO (as they are hindering the smuggling), and also, to a certain degree attacks that targets tourists and the repeated bombing of the pipeline as these attacks damage the governments most important source of income. However, it does not explain the attacks that are targeting Christians and Sufis in Sinai, or the attacks directly targeting Israel.

In the second explanation, researches states that there has been an incremental increase of radical groups in Sinai since the 80s, and there are a growing number of al-Qaida -affiliated or inspired, terrorists groups in Sinai. Here the ethnicity or national belonging of the perpetrators is not the main focus, as all perpetrators are described as “radical Islamists”. Nonetheless, the perpetrators of most of the attacks occurring in Sinai are identified as a mix between the local Bedouins, Egyptian born

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<sup>228</sup> Sharp, "Egypt in Transition." Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front."

<sup>229</sup> Yaari, "Sinai: A New Front," p.5.



Palestinians, Hamas members, other Palestinians situated in Gaza, Egyptians from other parts of Egypt and jihadists coming from other countries. In this explanation, the motive behind these attacks could be the radical ideology in itself, or it could be motivated by the unfair treatment by the Mubarak regime and *justified* by a “radical Islamist ideology”. Attacks that could fit this explanation are the repeated attacks on Sufis, Christians, Israeli military, civilians (tourists) and infrastructure, the MFO (as they are considered an extension of U.S. forces), and to a certain degree the repeated bombing of the pipeline as these attacks halted the supply of gas to Israel.

The third explanation seeks to explain why the situation deteriorated after the revolution, underlining the security vacuum that occurred with the ouster of Mubarak. It is interesting to conclude, because it clearly shows separatist tendencies among the Bedouins.

I will underline that none of the explanations are mutually exclusive. However, there are two underlying notions/ assumptions. The first is that the Bedouins essentially *want* to be recognized as “true” Egyptian citizens and to be included in the Egyptian nation state, however without being discriminated. This is expressed by emphasizing Bedouin statements where they demand citizenship, landownership rights and their will to be subscribed in the military. The second assumption is that the Bedouins, especially those inside radical Islamists groups, will not, and therefore cannot, be re-integrated into the nation state. This is expressed by highlighting for instance the Islamist groups’ view of the government as infidel, and the groups’ efforts to establish an Islamic state in Sinai. Of course, both of these notions are in a way “true”, and my intention with this section is not to answer what is the most prevalent notion among the Bedouins, but to make the reader aware of these different notions before we turn to look at the FJP’s view on the situation in Sinai.

## 4 Freedom and Justice Party's view on Sinai

I believe that Bedouins want to feel as real Egyptians.

- Nussiba Ashraf

All of my sources in the FJP told me the situation in the entire Egypt was difficult, while the situation in Sinai was described as “out of control”. My interviewees underlined that the FJP, as a political party, was obligated and prepared to prioritize the situation in the peninsula.

In this chapter I will present my sources' view on *who* they believe are the perpetrators behind the attacks in Sinai from 2004 until 2012, and *why* they believe that Sinai is radicalizing. My informants' answers on these questions will make it easier to analyse and understand the FJP's plan of action, their policy. It is also interesting to examine in what degree the FJP's perception of the situation in Sinai corresponds with the explanations given by the ICG, the Chatham House and the Washington Institute, presented in the previous chapter.

### 4.1 Who Are the Perpetrators and What Are Their Motives?

During the past decade Sinai has increasingly radicalized. As described in previous chapters, there have been many forms of attacks that have targeted Egyptian soldiers, police and civilians, in addition to Israeli military and civilians. Foreign tourists have been abducted and the MFO headquarter has been surrounded and international observational forces been held hostages. Furthermore, MFO vehicles have several times been hit by improvised explosive devices (IED) and local Sufis shrines and Christian churches have been hit by rockets and been fired on.

It is important to underline that many of my sources stressed the absence of reliable data concerning the identities of the perpetrators. Nussiba Ashraf, who at the time of my fieldwork was a member of the Foreign Relations Committee and was heading the Research Team, said, “These groups are not well known. [...] Because the government's security was not extended to these places, we don't know a lot.”<sup>230</sup> Nevertheless, all of my sources answered my questions, and all of them had an idea of who might be behind the various attacks and what might be the perpetrators motivation.

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<sup>230</sup> Nussiba Ashraf, Member of FJP Foreign Relations Committee and heading the FJP Research Team. Interview by author, Cairo, November 2012.

#### 4.1.1 *“The People in Sinai Resent the Regime”*

The first person I interviewed was Abdelrahman Ayyash, a previous member of the MB and currently working as a researcher for the ICG. One of the first things he told me, was that it was “absolutely obvious” that the perpetrators of the various attacks in Sinai are Egyptians. I asked him if he was talking about Bedouin Egyptians or Egyptians from mainland Egypt, and he replied: “From what I saw, all of them were Bedouins. When people talked to me they confirmed that all of the jihadists were from different tribes.”<sup>231</sup>

Hilmi al-Gazzar, who at the time we spoke, was a senior leader of the MB and was the leader of the FJP in the district of Giza, stated that “the angry people of Sinai” were the ones that executed most of the attacks in Sinai.<sup>232</sup> When I asked al-Gazzar why “the people of Sinai” are acting this way, he said that “the current situation in Sinai is a result of many decades of neglect”, adding that “the former regime didn’t care about an actual development in Sinai, and that resulted in resentment that turned the people into rebels”.<sup>233</sup> Al-Gazzar later described “the people of Sinai” as Bedouins.

Similarly, Dr. Murad Ali, at that time the FJP’s media advisor, underlined that the situation was a result of “accumulations of bad management for more than thirty years and the previous regime handling Sinai poorly” adding this had created a gap between the Bedouins and other Egyptians.<sup>234</sup> Amr Arfan, who was the FJP’s assistant secretary in the area of Mokattam and the head of the Political Communication Secretariat, told me that he frequently visited Sinai, and not just the tourist places in the South, but travelled to al-Arish and other places in the North. Arfan said:

In any place in the world, where its people suffers from marginalization, poverty and unemployment, where the people don’t have job opportunities and there is no development, all these factors create a fertile environment for many problems that could exist in a society.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> Abdelrahman Ayyash, Works as a researcher in the ICG, prior MB member, Interview by author, Cairo, October 2012.

<sup>232</sup> Hilmi al-Gazzar, FJP leader in the district of Giza, senior leader of the MB, member of the MB’s shura council, Interview by author [in Arabic], Cairo, October 2012.[Interview in Arabic, translated by author]

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Murad Ali, FJP’s media advisor, Interview by author, Cairo, October 2012.

<sup>235</sup> Amr Arfan, FJP’s assistant secretary in the area of Mokattam and the head of the Political Communication Secretariat, Interview by author [in Arabic], Mokattam, November 2012.[Interview in Arabic, translated by author]

Arfan told me that this was the case in Sinai, and that the bad condition for the “people of Sinai” had forced many into the “black marked”. The three above-mentioned sources, in addition to Ala’ Sayyid, who was the leader of the FJP in the area of Mokattam, told me about the Bedouins’ illegal activities, the smuggling of drugs and weapons, and in some cases humans, over the boarder to Israel and Gaza. However, what I found interesting was my interviewees’ eagerness to explain *why* the Bedouins were pursuing these illegal activities. These sources explained that when the local police interfered with the Bedouins’ new economy, the people perceived this as unjust, because they considered the smuggling their only opportunity to earn an income. My informants then underlined that there are no other legitimate ways of earning money in Sinai because of the lack of development, and all of them told me that they understood the Bedouins’ behaviour and viewed it as natural<sup>236</sup>, given the situation.<sup>237</sup> Nussiba Ashraf pointed out: “If I don’t have a job, what can I do? I would search for one, so I start down that path- the same as what Somali pirates used to do.”<sup>238</sup> My interviewees also stated that this kind of illegal activities could lead to terrorism if they believed that their source of income was in any way threatened. When I asked my sources in the FJP why they believed people turned to violence, all seven of them declared that poverty was one of the main reasons.

When I asked Ammar Fayad, an active member of FJP who works for the *Ikhwan Web*, the MB official English-language web page, directly whom he thought was behind the three attacks from 2004-2006, he said that although the actual perpetrators were radical Islamists, consisting of mostly Bedouins, they became this way after being mistreated by the government, and especially after the rough treatment during the initial investigation of the Taba attack:

The police made a big mistake when they dealt with this situation. They dealt with this situation without any humanity towards the people in Sinai. Therefore the people in Sinai resent the regime, and they still do. Most of those arrested at that time were Egyptians, of

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<sup>236</sup> My sources used the Arabic word: *tabī‘iyy*.

<sup>237</sup> al-Gazzar; Arfan; Ammar Fayad, FJP member and works for the Ikhwan Web, Interview by author, Cairo, November 2012.

<sup>238</sup> Ashraf.

course the police told us that someone were from Palestine, some from Jordan, but most of them were Egyptian.<sup>239</sup>

When I asked him what he meant by “the people of Sinai” and “Egyptians”, he told me that he was referring to the Bedouins. Hilmi al-Gazzar supported this explanation saying: “I believe that the Sinai people are behind it. The police were mistreating them in the past, and it is still happening. This has caused great resentment and resulted in attacks on the police.”<sup>240</sup> Also the remaining five of my informants in the FJP said that extensive use of government lead violence against the Bedouins had resulted in counter violence that had only escalated the situation instead of solving it.

Concerning the frequent kidnappings of foreign tourists, all my sources agreed that various Bedouin tribes were the perpetrators of these attacks. The FJP’s view here is not surprising, as the victims are often used to push for the release of tribesmen from jail, sometimes in addition to claiming ransom.<sup>241</sup> Most of the time the tourists are treated well and released unharmed, able to describe their abductors.<sup>242</sup> Fayad explained that some Bedouins had been unjustly jailed after the Taba attack, and Bedouins used the abductions of tourists, as a way of negotiation with the government because the tribes regarded this, as the only thing the government would respond to.<sup>243</sup>

All of my sources, among them Nussiba Ashraf, emphasized that the Bedouins had countless reasons to be angry at the previous regime, mentioning the government’s neglect of Sinai that had lead to poverty and lack of opportunities for the Bedouins and the police violence against the native population in Sinai.<sup>244</sup> She later in the interview emphasized that the current situation was also the result of a deliberate divide and conquer policy lead by the Mubarak regime.

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<sup>239</sup> Fayad.

<sup>240</sup> al-Gazzar.

<sup>241</sup> "Bedouin release two kidnapped UK tourists in Sinai".

<sup>242</sup> In contrast to kidnapping and human trafficking involving Sudanese and Eritreans. See:

"Egypt/Sudan: Refugees And Asylum- Seekers Face Brutal Treatment, Kidnapping for Ransom and Human Trafficking." I did not ask about this kind of kidnappings and human trafficking during my interviews as I was not aware of the issue at the time.

<sup>243</sup> Fayad.

<sup>244</sup> Ashraf.

To neglect a part of your land and not trust its people, that was the main fault of the Mubarak regime. They neglected the land altogether and they were sending a clear message to its people: We do not trust you.<sup>245</sup>

Walid al-Haddad is a senior member of the MB and a founding member of the FJP, and at the time of the interview the second in command in FJP's Foreign Relationship Committee. He supported Nussiba's view that the reason why Bedouins were rebelling was partly due to the deliberate oppression, and especially the execution, of Bedouins by the previous regime.<sup>246</sup> Amr Fayad highlighted that the Bedouins did not have the freedom to participate in politics, and they were not included in the political processes and this might have caused them to use violence. Nussiba Ashraf likewise stated that "if your country is excluding you from all the ways of participating, the usage of violence may be a political language. This is not to say that violence is right, but we can understand it."<sup>247</sup>

Ala' Sayyid also underlined the landownership issue as a motive and an explanation as to why "the people of Sinai" are resorting to the use of violence and underlined that the law "also prevents your children from inheriting property."<sup>248</sup> Likewise, Ali, Ashraf and al-Haddad, also declared the problem with landownership for Bedouins as an important issue that needed to be solved in order to halt the radicalization.<sup>249</sup> Murad Ali also stated: "It is very well known that democracy is minimizing terrorism, because when people are exchanging their ideas you are treating the misunderstandings."<sup>250</sup> Al-Gazzar supported this view, saying:

During the old regime, there were ideas that never came into the light because of the oppression, [...] but when we start to discuss those ideas and listen to them in public, [...] then people will shift from practical jihad to democratic jihad.<sup>251</sup>

Likewise, Amr Arfan stated that one of the reasons why the radicalization occurred was the exclusion of the Bedouins from political institutions and from the police, the

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

<sup>246</sup> Walid al-Haddad, FJP founding member, MB senior member, the second in command of FJP's Foreign Relationship Committee, Interview by author Cairo, November 2012.

<sup>247</sup> Ashraf.

<sup>248</sup> Ala' Sayyid, FJP leader in the area of Mokattam, Interview by author [in Arabic], Mokattam, November 2012. [Interview in Arabic, translated by author]

<sup>249</sup> Ali; Ashraf; al-Haddad.

<sup>250</sup> Ali.

<sup>251</sup> al-Gazzar.

army and the Egyptian intelligence service.<sup>252</sup> Many of my sources clearly stated that the Bedouins felt alienated from the Egyptian society because they had not been included. Murad Ali presented me with an example:

In for example in Canada or Australia, when you have immigrants you are allowing them to own land and you are trying to incorporate them into your community to be a part of the community, and they were keen to let them dress the same dress, to talk the same language, to include their kids into your schools, to allow them to go for governmental jobs, to feel I am now a Canadian, or I am now an Australian, to feel loyal to this new country. Unfortunately, we were doing the opposite to our people in Sinai. They were not able to go join the police or the army.<sup>253</sup>

Seven out of my seven sources in the FJP underlined the lack of political rights and oppression as a reason for why some people turn to the use of violence.

I asked my interviewees if they believed that the Bedouins were radicalizing because they sought to gain any special rights, applying only for the Bedouins. Nussiba Ashraf answered: “I believe that Bedouins want to feel as real Egyptians.”<sup>254</sup> I said that while most Egyptians are taught that they decent from the Pharaohs, the Bedouins are taught that they descend in a straight lineage from the Prophet Muhammad himself.<sup>255</sup> I then asked if Ashraf believed that the Bedouins perhaps *want* to be different, she replied:

I don’t think so. I don’t think they have any ambitions to emphasize their different origins, because the Egyptians are also very much related to the Arab. The Arab affiliations are very important to the Egyptian people, so I don’t think there are any contradictions in having a Pharaonic heritage and descend from the Prophet. So I think that the real problem of the Bedouins is that they would like to feel like they are Egyptians with equal rights like other Egyptians. This is the main problem.<sup>256</sup>

Nussiba Ashraf told me that she did not want to categorize them “as Bedouins, or people living in Upper Egypt, people living in Cairo and so on,” underlining that “all Egyptians are equal.”<sup>257</sup> When I asked her why the Copts are mentioned in a separate section in the FJP’s program, but not the Bedouins, she replied: “The reasons why

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<sup>252</sup> Arfan.

<sup>253</sup> Ali.

<sup>254</sup> Ashraf.

<sup>255</sup> Greenwood, *The Sinai, A Physical Geography*: p.9.

<sup>256</sup> Ashraf.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

we mention Christians in our program are that this issue of ‘how will the FJP deal with the rights of the Christians’ has been raised before.”<sup>258</sup> She explained that the FJP needed to assure the Christians that they would not be discriminated against. Nussiba continued by saying: “But actually the Egyptian people are very homogeneous. When you walk in the street you can’t differentiate between a Christian and a Muslim.”<sup>259</sup> Also Ala’ Sayyid was eager to stress that the FJP does not view the Bedouins as a “special group” in Egypt:

The Bedouins are not a minority, and they are not terrorists. They are just like other groups in Egypt. Of course there are some terrorists that are Bedouins, like there are some terrorists from Upper Egypt.<sup>260</sup>

Murad Ali added, “they are not a minority, they are Egyptians.”<sup>261</sup> Walid al-Haddad told me that the Mubarak regime had deliberately caused what he described as “the sectarianism in Egypt”, telling the Egyptian people that some groups are different. Al-Haddad referred to the 2011 revolution and said: “But now, after the Tahrir-square, you couldn’t separate between Christians and Muslims, or Bedouin or Upper Egyptian people, we are all one hand.”<sup>262</sup> Even the president was careful to use the word “minority”. An example is Mursi’s following statement: “Christians in Egypt are partners in this homeland, not a minority. They have the full right in their state, because they are an important component of this nation.”<sup>263</sup> The only one of my sources that actually told me the Bedouins have a distinct culture was Amr Arfan, saying “the Sinai’s people, they have good customs and traditions, and very good characters.” He continued to describe their culture as noble and generous adding that the Bedouin customs and traditions are different from Cairo and Alexandria. Arfan said that in order to “solve a problem in a society one needs to find solutions that fit with the society itself. We can’t solve their problems in the same way we solve Cairo-people’s problems because that wouldn’t suit them.”<sup>264</sup> The words “minority” or “Bedouin” are also absent in the FJP program. Only Amr Arfan and the two journalists I interviewed pointed out that the Bedouins have another culture and

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Sayyid.

<sup>261</sup> Ali.

<sup>262</sup> al-Haddad.

<sup>263</sup> "Egypt President Morsi: I Refuse to Describe Christians as Minority," *FJP Online*, December 1, 2012, <http://www.fjponline.com/article.php?id=1147> (accessed September 25, 2013).

<sup>264</sup> Arfan.



heritage than the dominant Egyptian culture. However, not even Arfan labelled the Bedouins as a *minority*.

#### 4.1.2 “*Al-Qaida? I Don’t Think so. We Can Call Them Islamic Jihadists.*”

When I interviewed Lina Attalah, the editor of Egyptian Independent, she told me that it was possible to separate between two kinds of violence in Sinai. Regarding the frequent kidnappings, blocking of international roads and attacks on police stations she said:

These are then people who are not high profiled terrorists, they are not al-Qaida, they are no one, they are just people of the area who are not being heard and don’t have proper mediators to the government... Because there are no proper mediations in Sinai, and those guys are resorting to extreme acts of lawlessness, [...] and that is an expression of anger.<sup>265</sup>

Attalah went on to state that “there is also another layer of action, as we all know, that is manifested in like a higher scale of violence, such as the killing of 16 soldiers, such as the constant pipeline explosions.”<sup>266</sup> Attalah added that these actions could demand “some higher level of organisation”, although she did not mentioning al-Qaida.<sup>267</sup>

Usually, when I asked my sources to describe the identity of the perpetrators of the different attacks in Sinai, my sources described them as “radical Islamists”. I further asked about the identity of these “radical Islamists” and my sources said they consisted of mostly “the people of Sinai” or “Egyptians”. When I asked who “the people of Sinai” were, and what origin these “Egyptians” had, it finally became clear that my sources were in fact referring to the Bedouins. Ammar Fayad also describes the perpetrators in this way. He told me that he believed that the majority are Bedouins, initially saying “the people of Sinai”, but added that also Palestinians may be involved. Regarding the Palestinians, Fayad explained that some Palestinians have lived in Sinai for generations, but do not have Egyptian citizenship, and others are perhaps coming through the tunnels from Gaza. However, Fayad also declared that the increasing violence in Sinai is “not a problem between the state and the Bedouins, no, it is a problem between the state and radical Islamist movements”.<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>265</sup> Lina Attalah, Editor of the newspaper Egypt Independent, Interview by author, Cairo, October 2012.

<sup>266</sup> Ibid.

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Fayad.

Fayad added that most Bedouins are not radicals, and members of the radical groups might also come from outside Egypt. “The borders of Sinai are open, so anything can happen”, he said.<sup>269</sup> Walid al-Haddad supported this view, affirming that the investigation of the attack on August 5, 2012 “had given answers that just gave more questions.”<sup>270</sup> Al-Haddad said that following the investigations it had become clear that there were no Egyptians that executed that terrorist attack.<sup>271</sup>

I asked my sources if they believed, as the media often state, that al-Qaida is involved in the radicalization. Nussiba Ashraf rejected the idea altogether:

Al-Qaida? I don’t think so. This is the result of neglect. There are some extreme groups, and they are of course not the main groups of Sinai, we can call them Islamic jihadists, but I don’t think they have any relations with al-Qaida.<sup>272</sup>

Ammar Fayad stated, “They may be reading the ethics of al-Qaida, or other Islamist theories from Ayman Zawahiri and believe in it”. However, he emphasized that he did not believe the Islamists in Sinai had a personal connection with al-Qaida.<sup>273</sup> When I asked Fayad what he thought might be the motivation behind these attacks, he said:

They don’t agree on any relations with Israel of course. Look, most of Egyptians refuse peace with Israel, but they don’t say that we should fight Israel, we don’t need to fight and we don’t need to have the peace agreement. Of course the Islamist movement refuse any relations with Israel, so for the perpetrators it is logic to attack the gas line and other things.<sup>274</sup>

Like many of my sources, Fayad believed that radical Islamists were the perpetrators because of the many attacks targeting Israel, referring to the al-Qaida ideology’s outspoken hatred towards Israel. I argued that many of the attacks have been directed at Egyptian facilities, and not actually directly at Israel, and he replied:

Some groups are only interested in the Palestinian situation and only think about how they can fight Israel, but some movements also think that the Egyptian government, by dealing with the

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<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> al-Haddad.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Ashraf.

<sup>273</sup> Fayad.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

Israeli government, becomes a legitimate target. [...] They believe in an al-Qaida ethics, and al-Qaida of course called all the governments of Arab counties *kufar* [non-believers].<sup>275</sup>

Ala' Sayyid and Murad Ali also stated that some groups might be inspired by the al-Qaida ideology, but did not believe that these groups received any fighters, funds or instructions from the core al-Qaida group, led by al-Zawahiri. Hilmi al-Gazzar and Amr Arfan did not mention al-Qaida at all. Fayad and al-Haddad added that although these radical Islamist groups might consist of some "foreign fighters", they are working together with local groups consisting of Bedouins and local Palestinians.

Ammar Fayad and Ala' Sayyid stated that the current situation in Sinai is a result of a global radical movement that started around a decade ago. The reason why this movement got foothold in Sinai is accordingly due to the Camp David agreement's restrictions on security, in a combination with Sinai's rough topography, which made the Peninsula a fruitful place for terrorists to hide. Sayyid said: "There are two reasons why Sinai is a good place to be a terrorist: the geography and the fact that there is no control."<sup>276</sup>

I want you to understand that since the Camp David agreement, Sinai has been out of control. If anything happens, the regime has no opportunity to stop it or control the area. For this reason many of the terrorists from Upper Egypt went to Sinai. This is a good place to be, because there is no control there.<sup>277</sup>

Walid al-Haddad also stressed, "Sinai is a very good platform for terrorism. There is no life there, it is only desert and it's very close to Israel, so it's an operation room for any terrorist group".<sup>278</sup> My interviewees described Sinai, and especially the North, as a lawless state, a "Wild West", ideal for outlaws to hide and radical Islamists to recruit new members and execute attacks without interference.

When I asked Ala' Sayyid why he believed that people become radical Islamists he emphasized "poor education" and "few other public services".<sup>279</sup> He underlined that especially young people with no education might accept radical ideas because they have no other knowledge of "what true Islam is really about".<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Sayyid.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> al-Haddad.

<sup>279</sup> Sayyid.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

Ammar Fayad said that “the absence of right knowledge of Islam and the weakness of education in Egypt play a big role” regarding the appearance of terrorism and the use of violence in the name of Islam. Ala’ Sayyid, Walid al-Haddad, Amr Arfan, Murad Ali, Nussiba Ashraf and Hilmi al-Gazzar, explicitly said that the lack of proper education was a factor that could lead a person to believe in the “wrong Islam” and make him or her become a radical Islamist.<sup>281</sup>

#### *4.1.3 “ Hamas Doesn’t Desire any Disturbance in the Sinai Peninsula ”*

In international and Egyptian media, both Hamas and al-Qaida have been blamed for executing various attacks in Sinai. Ayyash stated that “perhaps there were relations, but not organisational relations, I mean Hamas are not leading, but they probably have good relations with some brigades, like Qassam-brigades or something.”<sup>282</sup> When I asked al-Haddad what he thought about the rumours that Hamas or other groups are using Sinai as a launching pad against Israel and referred to the two cross-boarder attacks in April and August of 2010, when rockets were launched from Sinai and landed in Israel and Jordan. He replied sharply: “There are no rockets from Sinai,” and added that the FJP and most Egyptians are very keen to have stability and security between its neighbours. Yet, underlining that: “We are with the right of the people in Palestine, and we are condemning what happened from Israel towards the Palestinian people.”<sup>283</sup> Ammar Fayad also denied any involvement of Hamas:

No, not even during the period of the Mubarak regime. There was no involvement of the Hamas even when it was clear that Mubarak had good relations with Israel. When it comes to for example the gas pipe-explosions, anyone can do this. This is happening in the desert without any police and security force, so anyone can do this.<sup>284</sup>

Hilmi al-Gazzar replied that he did not think Hamas are executing any of the attacks, adding that Hamas is “very busy with the situation in Gaza” and that Hamas leaders declared that they “don’t desire any disturbance in the Sinai Peninsula”.<sup>285</sup>

Although my sources denied any involvement of Hamas in the radicalization of Sinai, they did not all deny the involvement of Palestinians. Ammar Fayad said:

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<sup>281</sup> Arfan; Ali; Ashraf; al-Gazzar.

<sup>282</sup> Ayyash.

<sup>283</sup> al-Haddad.

<sup>284</sup> Fayad.

<sup>285</sup> al-Gazzar.

Of course, the situation in Gaza is also an important factor in this situation. After Hamas won the election in Gaza in 2006, some Islamist groups in Gaza refused the political process and rejected Hamas, as it now had become a political party and therefore refused violent *jihad*. So they went in opposition to Hamas.<sup>286</sup>

Fayad said that one of the groups is known as the *Bayt al-Maqdis*. He hastily stated, “However, Hamas dealt with these groups effectively, and has shown that it can control this movement in Gaza. Most of these groups found a good environment to be safe in Sinai and to be far from the hands of Hamas’ security arms.”<sup>287</sup>

#### 4.1.4 “We Still Have what we Call Fulul”

The Sharm al-Shaykh terrorist attack is described as the biggest terrorist incident in Egypt’s history. Amr Arfan and Ala’ Sayyid agreed that that the TWJ executed the attack. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the group consisted mostly of Bedouins and Egyptian-born Palestinians and claimed responsibility for the attack. However, my two interviewees argued that the group might have been infiltrated by Mubarak’s men, or at least been instructed by the former Interior Minister, Habib al-Adly, about when and where to bomb. They consequently viewed the following attack as Habib al-Adly’s fault, because even if he did not directly orchestrate it, the Dahab attack was seen as a revenge attack. Accordingly, the regime’s brutal treatment of the Sinai population, and the Bedouins in particular, during the investigation following the Taba (2004) and Sharm al-Shaykh (2005) attacks is said to have made the Bedouins rebel and execute the Dahab attack in 2006 in order to paralyze the lucrative tourist industry, and in that way damage the Mubarak regime.

When I asked who they believed was *responsible* for the Taba, Sharm al-Shaykh and Dahab attack, both Amr Arfan and Ala’ Sayyid answered with a question. They both asked me if I had heard about the bombing of a church in Alexandria in January 2011? I told them that I had read about it and that about 20 Christian Copts died as a result of the bombing. They then underlined that this attack was *also* orchestrated by al-Adly. When I asked Amr Arfan how the Interior minister would benefit from such attacks, he replied:

This incident was used by the regime as a justification in order to imprison thousands of regime opponents. However, during the revolution, someone broke into the state security

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<sup>286</sup> Fayad.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

forces building and discovered several secret documents. Among these documents was one that proved that the bombing was executed on orders given by the former -Interior Minister Habib al-Adly, and the purpose of the attack was to broaden the gap between Muslims and Christians. The 2004 bombings that happened in Taba, and two more after that, are the exact same thing as the Saints' Church.<sup>288</sup>

Walid al-Haddad stated that supporters of the Mubarak regime were directly involved in the deteriorating situation in Sinai. Al-Haddad told me “many groups are working to make problems in Sinai”.<sup>289</sup> When I asked him who these people are, he said:

We still have what we call *fulul*, or the supporters of the Mubarak regime. So they want to make a detrition in the internal policy of Egypt, not related to the foreign policy and the relationship between Egypt and Israel, no, they are focusing on the internal and domestic policy of Egypt, and how they can make the situation for the president critical. So they make the situation difficult.<sup>290</sup>

Al-Haddad explained to me that “these people” are working for the return of the old regime. In order to do this “they support rebels and make disturbance themselves and try to undermine the stability of the area”, stressing that this was not just in Sinai, but also in the whole of Egypt.

#### 4.1.5 “*The Israeli Intelligence is Involved, We Can't Deny that.*”

While my sources mostly blamed the Mubarak regime, indirectly or directly, for the Bedouins' rebellious behaviour, some also blamed Israel for manipulating the Bedouins. Amr Arfan stated, “the current situation in Sinai is not only caused by the people of Sinai themselves, there is always someone who's trying to mess with<sup>291</sup> Sinai.”<sup>292</sup> I asked him why he believed this, and he replied:

We in the party, members of the interior ministry, among people from the army and from the presidential palace, all went to meet with shaykhs of the tribes in Sinai. These shaykhs stated that they have no problems with the government, or with the country. [...] Someone has a

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<sup>288</sup> Arfan.

<sup>289</sup> Waleed

<sup>290</sup> al-Haddad.

<sup>291</sup> He used the verb: *ya 'abuth m 'a*.

<sup>292</sup> Arfan.

hidden agenda, and is interfering with the situation in Sinai (...) like Mubarak used to, but now Mubarak is gone, and therefore they need to find another way of upholding the chaos.<sup>293</sup>

When I later in the interview asked who might be interested in the deterioration of Sinai, he told me that Mossad, the Israeli intelligence, was behind the deterioration.<sup>294</sup> When I told Arfan that Israeli media claimed there was an increase of attacks after the opening of the borders between Egypt and Gaza in the spring of 2011, insinuating that Hamas was making the situation in Sinai worse, Arfan replied that these accusations were part of an Israeli conspiracy-plan:

This is part of a plan. They want the whole world to visualize that if we open borders for our brothers in Gaza to lift the blockade on the Gaza strip, then attacks and killing will happen. start happening. They are trying to deliver a message that if we open the borders, then Egypt is in danger. However, everyone knows that there are tunnels between Egypt and Gaza, so if a Palestinian wanted to come to Egypt, it would cost him 200 dollars to cross through the tunnel. If someone wanted to execute a terrorist attack it's already very easy.<sup>295</sup>

Murad Ali told me that he believed that he thought the majority of the actual perpetrators were “the people of Sinai”, however, he also said that “some intelligence could infiltrate those groups, pushing them in one direction or another”, later indicating that Mossad, Israeli intelligence, might be behind some of the attacks in the peninsula. Hilmi al-Gazzar also underlined that most of the perpetrators are the people of Sinai, but added: “Also, the Israeli Intelligence is involved, and we can’t deny that.”<sup>296</sup> Al-Gazzar added: “Israel is working to destabilize the area and to create a polarization between the people in the area and the government, previous and present”.<sup>297</sup> When I asked why Israel would do this, he said that even though Egypt and Israel have a peace treaty “Israel is not Egypt’s real friend”.<sup>298</sup>

When I asked my interviewees if Israel did not suffer from the radicalization of Sinai, the general tone in the interview changed and I was treated like I was incredibly naive for even asking this question. They told me that Egypt had and always has played a chief role in “the Arab World”, but that Mubarak was corrupt and did not use his influence. To give me an example to prove this, Amr Arfan told

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<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

<sup>296</sup> al-Gazzar.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

me that in 2009, when Israel was attacking Gaza “no one did anything”, whilst in 2012, the attack only lasted for 6-7 days, arguing that this was because of president Mursi’s efforts. Arfan did not however, mention that Mursi, who had previously refused to talk to Israelis or even pronounce the country’s name, was praised by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton for his role as a mediator between Gaza and Israel during the Gaza crisis.<sup>299</sup>

I was surprised that three of my sources believed that Mossad was able, and had an interest in destabilizing Sinai. I had thought that as the attacks directly affected Israel, they would want to keep the area stable. Although the minority of my sources believed that Israeli intelligence were directly involved, all of my interviewees in the FJP believed that Israel was benefiting from a “weak Sinai”. When I asked Ammar Fayad about the situation in Sinai he replied:

The situation in Sinai is a big challenge for Egypt. After the Camp David agreement that came after the war of October, the Egyptian regime became weaker in Sinai. I don’t know if there was a secret agreement between Mubarak and Benjamin Netanyahu, but the general situation was state absence in Sinai resulting in a weak security situation, not under control because of the agreement.<sup>300</sup>

Also Murad Ali shared this view saying when Sinai, which shares border with Israel, is destabilizing, that makes Egypt, “from a national security point of view”, unable to stand against Israel. “We are not talking about war, but we are talking about strength in political relations”.<sup>301</sup> During my interviews, I understood that my sources viewed the Camp David Accords as a key reason as to why Sinai is radicalizing. They explained that the Egyptian military are under the Camp David prevented from introducing more than light weapons into Area B, just east of al-Arish, and limited to a police force in Area C, next to the border. Consequently, after the 2011 revolution, Egyptian soldiers found themselves rapidly outgunned by local forces. Because Israel was stressing the importance of continuing the treaty, then according to my sources, Israel must want Sinai to remain weak.

Amr Arfan pointed out that there might furthermore be another reason why Sinai is a “conflict area”:

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<sup>299</sup> Hamza Hendawi, "Morsi's Gaza Ceasefire Deal Role Secures Egypt's President As Major Player," *Huff Post World*, November 21, 2012, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/21/morsi-gaza-ceasefire\\_n\\_2173589.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/21/morsi-gaza-ceasefire_n_2173589.html) (accessed October 17, 2013).

<sup>300</sup> Fayad.

<sup>301</sup> Ali.



Sinai is an area full of resources, and resourceful areas are usually the areas of conflicts, so if you look at the map of the world and you spot a conflict, you'll know that it's a resourceful area, [...] Sinai is an area close to the Arabic Gulf which is full of petrol, and Sinai itself is rich with silicon [...], in addition to other minerals like phosphate and so on.<sup>302</sup>

While most of my interviewees described Sinai as an important area full of different types of resources, it was only Arfan that put forward the explanation that this was something that naturally attracted conflicts as there is something to fight over, mentioning that Israel might have an interest in re-occupying this land.

## **4.2 Predominantly Neglected and Scorned Bedouins**

In this chapter we have seen that my sources believe that the perpetrators of most attacks that have occurred in Sinai the past decade are predominantly the Bedouins. When my informants referred to attacks against the police, military and the frequent kidnappings, they described the perpetrators as “the people of Sinai”, namely the Bedouins. My sources believed that the main reason why the Bedouins rebel was the Mubarak regime's policy of neglect and discrimination. My interviewees all underlined poverty, government violence against own citizens and the lack of political rights as important reasons as to why the Bedouins are radicalizing.

Regarding the bombings of the gas pipe, the cross-border attacks and rockets being launched at Israel, attacks targeting the MFO and attacks targeting the Christians and the Sufis, my interviewees labelled the perpetrators as “radical Islamists”, and in some cases “terrorists”. The “radical Islamists” are described as a mix between radicalized Bedouins, local Palestinians, migrants from Gaza (not Hamas members), from central Egypt, or coming from other countries (not belonging to core al-Qaida). Some of my sources believed these groups are accordingly influenced by an al-Qaida ideology. My sources said this ideology was imported to Sinai over twenty years ago. The factors that supposedly made the radicalization of Sinai possible, and that made some people follow this violent ideology, are the lack of “proper education”, leading some to believe in a violent interpretation of Islam, and the lack of suitable security presence in the area, making Sinai a “terrorist haven”. The natural topography of Sinai is included as a reason for why Sinai is today, and always will be, difficult to control. The Camp David agreement with its

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<sup>302</sup> Arfan.

restrictions on military presence in Sinai is also described as an important reason for why the peninsula is out of control. Furthermore, three of my sources also suggest a direct involvement by the Mubarak regime or the *fulul* (supporters of the regime). Two sources said they believed the Israeli intelligence might have infiltrated the Sinai, pushing the Bedouins to rebel.

This identification of the perpetrators mostly complies with the descriptions presented in the previous chapter, with the exception of the denial of any involvement of Hamas or al-Qaida, also the scholarly explanations did not address any involvement of Mubarak, his cronies, nor the Israeli intelligence. The FJP's interpretations of why the people of Sinai are radicalizing, mostly complies with the explanations found in the previous chapter. However, while the scholars state that the continuous repression of "the Bedouin way of life", their culture and history, might be a reason why the Bedouins are rebelling, the FJP members stated they do not view the Bedouins as a minority group and only one of my sources actually stated that the Bedouins have a distinct culture.

## 5 Freedom and Justice Party's Policy

When there is life, the terrorism will disappear.

- Walid al-Haddad

As shown in the previous chapter, most of my sources in the FJP believe that the perpetrators of the attacks in Sinai are predominantly the Sinai Bedouins. Certain informants added that some perpetrators could have a Palestinian identity, in that they are born in Sinai by Palestinian parents, or coming from Gaza. Others described the perpetrators as Egyptians travelling to Sinai from other parts of Egypt, or as radical persons arriving from other countries. My interviewees stated that the lack of social and economic development, as well as government violence against its citizens and lack of political rights are important reasons for why the Bedouins are radicalizing. Most of my sources added that a radical Islamist ideology could be the motivation behind various attacks, stating that “the lack of proper education” was an important reason why some people came to follow this ideology. However, it was the lack of suitable security forces in the area that made Sinai into a “terrorist haven”. The Camp David Accords, with its restrictions on military presence in Sinai, in addition to the natural topography of Sinai, were viewed as the fundamental reasons in explanations of why Sinai is difficult to control. Consequently, the FJP needed to address three central issues: (1) The social and economical development of Sinai, (2) the military and security deficiency in the area, and (3) the government's relationship with the Bedouins. In this chapter I will present my sources' plan of action, representing the FJP's policy on these three points.

### 5.1 Plan of Action

Hilmi al-Gazzar summarized the FJP's policy, which all seven sources believed would halt and ultimately solve the Sinai issue. He argued that “there must be a development plan, and the government started doing that already.”<sup>303</sup> Al-Gazzar further said that the government also needed to “adjust the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel in order to allow the Egyptian government a sufficient security presence in Sinai”.<sup>304</sup> And lastly, he underlined that “the government should give the people of Sinai their full rights that were taken from them.”<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>303</sup> al-Gazzar.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.

### 5.1.1 *To Kill the Terrorist Problem With Development*

Walid al-Haddad told me that the key to prevent future terrorist attacks was to invest in the area, saying: “I think the most important way to kill the terrorist problem is the development of the industrial areas. [...] They will not survive together.”<sup>306</sup>

In FJP’s election program, Sinai is mentioned four times in a document consisting of 49 pages (in Arabic).<sup>307</sup> According to the program, the party’s priority in Sinai is the development of an industry that will provide increased job possibilities to all inhabitants. In its program, the FJP states that it aims to focus on development by “establishing national projects with geographical dimensions, giving priority to projects for the development of Sinai.”<sup>308</sup> More specifically, the FJP declares its desire to implement the “Sinai reconstruction project”, including the project to plant 400,000 acres of various crops in the peninsula in addition to constructing a network of railway lines for “the reclamation and reconstruction of Sinai.”<sup>309</sup> This is thought to serve industrial areas and new mining areas. In accordance with their program, all of my sources in the FJP emphasized the need to develop Sinai. Amr Arfan told me that firstly, the government needed to do research on Sinai in order to develop the peninsula in a suitable way:

The National Authority for the Development of the Sinai Peninsula [SDA], which was formed after the elections, is an agency where its employers’ work is being fully dedicated to do research and then implement the development of Sinai at all levels – culturally, educationally, socially and financially, focusing especially on solving the employment issue.<sup>310</sup>

He was eager to underline that this agency was established to “improve all of Sinai”, not just the South and not just the tourist industry, “like Mubarak had done”.<sup>311</sup> Ala’ Sayyid underlined that the FJP was planning a comprehensive development of all of Sinai, which would benefit the Bedouins in both the northern and southern parts of the peninsula.<sup>312</sup> Walid al-Haddad elaborated on the FJP’s more concrete plans for the development of Sinai, like the *Nahda*-program that is focusing on the

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<sup>306</sup> al-Haddad.

<sup>307</sup> Slideshare, "The Election Program of the Freedom and Justice Party [in Arabic]."

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., p.25.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid., pp.34-36.

<sup>310</sup> Arfan.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid.

<sup>312</sup> Sayyid.

development of the Suez Canal, and the *Wadi Tecnologiyya*-project, which is related to computer and IT technology.<sup>313</sup> Murad Ali added:

When it comes to the economic improvement, we want to develop the agriculture in Sinai and start with proper utilisation of the mines in Sinai, giving incentives for investors to move to Sinai and to build communities – especially industrial communities.<sup>314</sup>

Murad Ali told me in depth about a new bridge that the government, supposedly after the request of president Mursi, was going to build in Sinai. This bridge would connect the peninsula to Saudi Arabia and revive Sinai's tourist industry.<sup>315</sup>

My interviewees often referred to Sinai as a near-empty land, waiting to be populated and utilized. Ammar Fayad told me: "We also aim to increase the population in Sinai. Now we have about half a million living in Sinai, but we aim to raise this number."<sup>316</sup> Likewise, al-Haddad stated that the FJP's policy was to increase the migration flow of Egyptians from mainland Egypt to the peninsula. When I said that the Bedouins might consider bigger parts of Sinai as belonging to them, al-Haddad replied that the FJP works for "a fair distribution of the wealth of the land", explaining:

We have many resources in Sinai. During Mubarak's regime, most of these resources were distributed to some few people in the regime. Not to the people, for the Egyptians. So we now need to start cooperating between the people in Sinai, the government and the foreign investors, in order to extract these resources and to utilize these resources for the people in Sinai and for other people that will maybe migrate from other regions to Sinai.<sup>317</sup>

The FJP's re-population plan may seem logical to the central government, but for the free-moving Bedouins this would represent an uncomfortable development, as scarce resources, land and jobs would then have to be shared with settlers and developers.

Many of my sources underlined that a tighter cooperation with Hamas was needed in order to improve the economic situation in Sinai. During the time the FJP was in government, the relationship with Hamas was drastically improved. In the FJP's program, it is emphasized that the Palestine issue is important for the MB and the FJP, and that "Egypt's national security will only be achieved by carrying out its

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<sup>313</sup> al-Haddad.

<sup>314</sup> Ali.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> Fayad.

<sup>317</sup> al-Haddad.

role in the Arab and Islamic region [...]”.<sup>318</sup> After the revolution in 2011, Hamas offered logistical assistance to the Egyptian troops on the southern side of the border. Although it was tentative at first, the coordination expanded significantly after the fall of Mubarak. The Mursi government and Hamas ministers met and negotiated a future cooperation that was thought to reverse years of economic deterioration in Gaza and provide the Bedouins with a formal economy – above ground – in return for a closure of the tunnel complex. The Hamas prime minister and Mursi also discussed the reopening of the Egyptian consulate, the linkage of Gaza to Egypt’s electricity grid and the easing of travel restrictions for Palestinians. Accordingly, my sources stressed that a number of tribal chiefs from Sinai were also included in the meetings to discuss these issues.<sup>319</sup>

While the FJP was in government, close to two billion Egyptian pounds were allocated to the development of Sinai in the 2012-2013 fiscal budget.<sup>320</sup> After the 2011 revolution, the authorities established the SDA, whose tasks would include construction of a railway and a canal to supply water to central Sinai. They also planned to connect Egypt to the Arabian Peninsula with a bridge extending 32 kilometres across the Red Sea from Sinai to Tabuk in Saudi Arabia, with construction of the bridge set to begin in 2013.<sup>321</sup> My sources presented this as part of the FJP’s policy, and something that the party had accomplished while in government. Yet, as was the case with al-Sadat and to an extent also Mubarak, the FJP’s policy plans largely failed to materialize on the ground during FJP’s short time in power.

### *5.1.2 No Investment Will Come When People Are Killed*

My sources accused the Mubarak regime of not deploying sufficient military forces in Sinai in order to tackle the radicalization. At the same time, they also accused the regime of brutal use of other security forces in tackling the radicalization, including the widespread use of torture and mass arrests by the SSI. As we have seen in chapter two, the FJP’s program does not explicitly say there should be an increased presence of military forces in Sinai, but focuses on the reform of Egypt’s security

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<sup>318</sup> Scribd, "Freedom and Justice Party: Election Program," p.5.

<sup>319</sup> Ashraf, Sayyid.; Arfan.

<sup>320</sup> "Govt allocates LE1.95 bn for Sinai development," *Egypt Independent*, September 3, 2012, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/govt-allocates-le195-bn-sinai-development> (accessed September 16, 2013).

<sup>321</sup> Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.19.

forces in order to uphold and respect human rights and work in accordance with the rule of law.<sup>322</sup> Before Mursi had been elected president, he said on a conference in North Sinai that he believed the investment in Sinai would lead to national security:

We will not forget Sinai anymore, for the general good of all Egypt. We realize the importance of water and minerals of Sinai, and will work on the development of all fields here. This will also mean that Egypt's national security will be safeguarded against any aggression.<sup>323</sup>

When I asked my sources about their Sinai policy, they told me about the FJP's development plans. However, when I asked why they believe the current situation had emerged, they stressed the lack of security. Nussiba Ashraf was one of my informants who stated that she believed the increasing radicalization of Sinai is mainly due to "a cultural or ideological problem", underlining that proper education is the key to solve the radicalization. She explained: "OK, you cannot prevent terrorists from doing anything wrong in your country, you can kill them and arrest them and so on, but their ideas are still present."<sup>324</sup> Murad Ali and Nussiba Ashraf both stated that the FJP was going to improve the educational facilities in Sinai. Mursi also promised to dedicate 20 billion Egyptian pounds for the implementation of the *Nahda* project, which Sinai has a central role, and for "the Sinai and the university, adding more colleges during the coming 5 years."<sup>325</sup>

During the time when FJP was in power, the military launched an operation in Sinai that was initially named Operation Eagle, but later renamed into Operation Sinai. My sources gave me the impression that they had sanctioned this operation and fully supported it, arguing that Sinai is becoming a lawless area. When asked directly about the military operation, Nussiba Ashraf replied, "When you have a terrorist killing 16 of your soldiers, you cannot just tell him 'come here, and let us talk'".<sup>326</sup> Ammar Fayad further underlined: "You cannot do anything in Sinai before the security situation is improved. No investment will come when the police are being attacked and people are killed."<sup>327</sup> When I asked Murad Ali about the military operation, he stressed that the FJP needed more military in the area, but they needed

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<sup>322</sup> See chapter two.

<sup>323</sup> "Dr. Morsi: 20 Billion Pounds for the Reconstruction of Sinai over 5 Years".

<sup>324</sup> Ashraf.

<sup>325</sup> "Dr. Morsi: 20 Billion Pounds for the Reconstruction of Sinai over 5 Years".

<sup>326</sup> Ashraf.

<sup>327</sup> Fayad.

to use these forces “to protect the locals and not use the military against the people as the Mubarak regime did”. He continued by stating:

Violence should be treated and should be managed, but not with extra violence. If you can forgive people, and allow them to put down their weapons, with clear terms, and incorporate them into the country and the community, this will be very healthy because what we fear is to enter into a circle of violence that will never end.<sup>328</sup>

Later in the interview, Ali also added: “When you are harassing me or abusing my human rights, what happens? You will get a circle of revenge.”<sup>329</sup>

Operation Sinai is limited in time, but all of my sources underlined the need to *permanently* deploy more soldiers to the peninsula. I asked Ammar Fayad why the party was so concerned with the permanent increase of military forces in Sinai, when at the same time they asserted that development was the key to solve the radicalization in a long-term perspective. He told me that the party and the rest of the government viewed the situation as complex, and even though he still believed that development was vital, there were additional reasons for having a military presence in Sinai:

First of all, this is not only a security problem and not only a development problem. You should know that Sinai has a critical geography. Every time anyone wanted to control Egypt, they came through Sinai, and therefore you must have a strong military presence in Sinai. Not to fight terrorism, not to fight the people in Sinai, but to prevent illegal actions and activities in Sinai.<sup>330</sup>

Fayad therefore believed that the FJP had to deploy increased military forces to the peninsula on a permanent – something that is prohibited by the Camp David Accords. Prior to and during the parliamentary election in Egypt in 2011/2012, what concerned Israeli media, was the FJP’s views on the Camp David Accords.<sup>331</sup> Less than four months after Mursi had won the election, the FJP’s chairman, Dr. Muhammad Saad Katatny, delivered a statement that recommended “reviewing all unfair agreements that negatively impact Egypt’s right to protect its interests –

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<sup>328</sup> Ali.

<sup>329</sup> Ibid.

<sup>330</sup> Fayad.

<sup>331</sup> "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood: Fate of Israel peace treaty may be decided in referendum," *Haaretz*, January 1, 2012, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/egypt-s-muslim-brotherhood-fate-of-israel-peace-treaty-may-be-decided-in-referendum-1.404889> (accessed Mai 7, 2013).



especially the Camp David Accords – and reconsidering the clauses impeding full Egyptian sovereignty over Sinai.”<sup>332</sup> References to Israel in the Egyptian public discourse after the 2011 revolution were hostile; president Mursi did not speak directly with Israel and the gas agreement between the two countries was cancelled by Egypt in April 2012 after pressure from the Islamist parties.<sup>333</sup>

Some of my sources described Israel’s strategic dilemma as a choice between protecting its southern frontier by leaving Sinai in the hands of hostile but less technologically advanced non-state actors (Bedouins and others) or a proactive intervention while Egypt is weak. A third option, i.e. that Israel could actually empower Egypt’s military so close to its own border, was by my sources rejected as impossible. Therefore, all of my sources in the FJP seemed to be in agreement that “something had to be done” with the Camp David Accords, although they had differing views on what needed to be done. Ala’ Sayyid said, “the Muslim Brotherhood’s ideology considers Israel as an enemy and dictates that we should fight against it. However, we are also obliged to respect our agreements and treaties,” underlining that if *Israel* was to violate the treaty, Egypt would have the right to overturn it.<sup>334</sup> Walid al-Haddad added: “It needs to be a comprehensive peace from both sides,”<sup>335</sup> stating that although the FJP desires peace, they were going to request amendments to the accord, especially after the Gaza offensive in 2012. Al-Haddad implied that Israel through the assault on Gaza had in fact broken their part of the agreement. Some of FJP’s members stressed the importance of re-examining the peace treaty with Israel, while others indicated the government should abrogate the treaty because Israel has violated it, and others still wanted to allow the Egyptian people to vote on it via a referendum or to amend certain components.

The reason why my sources believed this was important was not just “to fight terrorists,” but also to protect civilians, investments and facilities in the area. Furthermore, my sources found it deeply unfair that although Sinai is considered Egyptian land, the treaty prevents Egypt from having a sufficient army in the area. Ala’ Sayyid chiefly among them - found it deeply unfair and absurd that while Sinai

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<sup>332</sup> "Political Parties, Movements at FJP HQ: We Will Visit Gaza; Review All Accords and Treaties with Israel," The Freedom and Justice Party, November 18, 2012, <http://www.fjparty.org/article.php?id=1101&ref=search.php> (accessed April 28, 2013).

<sup>333</sup> Ephraim Kam, "The Future of the Peace between Israel and Egypt," (Tel Aviv, Israel: Institute for National Security Studies, 2013), p.161.

<sup>334</sup> Sayyid.

<sup>335</sup> al-Haddad.

is considered Egyptian land, the treaty prevents Egypt from having its army there.<sup>336</sup> Nussiba Ashraf said: "Sinai is a very critical and important part for the national security of Egypt, so our position is simply that the Egyptian state has to extend its sovereignty on each part of it."<sup>337</sup>

Nevertheless, the treaty was not put to a referendum or altered in any way during the time the FJP was in power. Mursi continuously stressed his intention to respect all international agreements, and the Israeli Defence Minister, Ehud Barak, confirmed during Mursi's time as president that the two countries continue to consult with each other regarding additional troop placements in the Sinai under the "Agreed Activities Mechanism" overseen by the MFO.<sup>338</sup>

### *5.1.3 Make the Bedouins More Loyal to Their Country*

As my sources believed that the lack of development and the use of violence against people could lead to terrorism, they all emphasized the need to include the Bedouins in their development projects and reform the Egyptian security services. Ashraf underlined that they were already providing "the people of Sinai" with more jobs.<sup>339</sup> In April 2012, the North Sinai governor appointed by Mursi issued a decree making residence in the Sinai a condition for applying for civil servant jobs, and in both North and South Sinai municipal mayors appointed Bedouin deputies.<sup>340</sup> In addition to the policy shown above, it was clear that the FJP was also seeking to improve the relationship to the Bedouins in other ways.

### *Islam as a Common Platform*

Several of my interviewees in the FJP told me that many Egyptians, and especially the media, had characterized the Bedouins as more loyal to their tribes than to the Egyptian state, and some had even labelled the Bedouins as traitors for being overly friendly towards the Israelis during the occupation of Sinai from 1967-1982. My sources then underlined that this was of course not true, and that Bedouins were no different from other Egyptians.<sup>341</sup> During a conference in Sinai, prior to him being

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<sup>336</sup> Sayyid.

<sup>337</sup> Ashraf.

<sup>338</sup> Mitch Ginsburg, "For Israel, it's better to have Egyptian planes over Sinai than terrorist cells on the ground," *The Times of Israel*, August 8, 2012, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/better-to-have-egyptian-planes-in-the-skies-of-sinai-than-terrorist-cells-on-the-ground/> (October 12, 2012).

<sup>339</sup> Ashraf.

<sup>340</sup> Pelham, "Salvaging Sinai."

<sup>341</sup> Sayyid.; Fayad; Arfan.

president, Mursi referred to the Bedouins, stating: "History has written that they are the most patriotic people, who never betrayed their country – a land where prophets have walked; a land mentioned in the Holy Quran."<sup>342</sup> As the FJP is an Islamist party, they also underlined the common Islamic values that the party and the people of Sinai shared.<sup>343</sup>

### ***Halt the Discrimination of the Bedouins***

Muhammad Beltagy, FJP Secretary in Cairo, said in an interview that the welfare of "the Sinai people" is very important to the party. In an article posted in 2012 on the MB web page *Ikhwan Web*, he stated that the former regime "treated the people of Sinai as third class citizens".<sup>344</sup> In the same period as the article was written, Beltagy was head of the hearing committee of the Constituent Assembly, tasked with writing Egypt's new Constitution. During this period he visited the Sinai region, met families and elders, and listened to their suggestions for the constitution. On his Facebook page, Beltagy posted the following statement:

We were shocked to hear of the Sinai people's suffering and their sense of alienation in their own homeland, as they spoke of how they were persecuted and barred from all top civilian posts, and also from police, military and judicial colleges and jobs.<sup>345</sup>

All of my sources in the FJP were very aware of the Mubarak regime's discrimination towards the Bedouins in Sinai. When I asked Amr Arfan to tell me about the FJP's policy towards the Bedouins, he told me that "based on fundamental human rights, we want to give them equal rights to any other Egyptian, male or female, regardless of their religion and gender."<sup>346</sup> Hilmi al-Gazzar stated the FJP would provide the Bedouins with "their full rights that were taken from them, including the right to be officers in the police and the army, which was prohibited before."<sup>347</sup> Ashraf and Arfan also explicitly underlined this, with the additional specification that Bedouins should also be hired in the intelligence service.<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> "Dr. Morsi Assures Tourism Has Priority in Nahda Project," *FJP Online*, May 7, 2012 <http://www.fjponline.com/article.php?id=685&ref=search.php> (accessed September 22, 2013).

<sup>343</sup> Sayyid.; Fayad; Arfan.

<sup>344</sup> "Beltagy: Former Regime Treated People of Sinai as Third-Class Citizens," *Ikhwan Web*, July 31, 2012, <http://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=30217&ref=search.php> (accessed February 8, 2013).

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

<sup>346</sup> Arfan.

<sup>347</sup> al-Gazzar.

<sup>348</sup> Ashraf; Arfan.

Although not stating it outright, some of my sources gave me the impression that *the FJP* had started to change the trend of barring the Bedouins from security services. However, already in September 2011, before the FJP was in government, Egypt's military training college in Cairo began accepting Bedouin recruits from Sinai for the first time.<sup>349</sup> What is clear, however, is that the FJP wanted to continue this policy.

Nussiba Ashraf also highlighted the issue of the Bedouins' right to own land, stating:

What we are trying to do now is to enhance the development in Sinai so that the people in Sinai become more satisfied and more loyal to their lands. You have heard about the law of the land, that they did not have the possibility to own land before, so there are many actions to satisfy the people and their loyalty to the land, and to really include Sinai in the development of the whole Egyptian state.<sup>350</sup>

Al-Haddad and Nussiba told me that Mursi had already dealt with this issue, "giving the Bedouins their rights".<sup>351</sup> Ammar Fayad said that the FJP had actually started to "solve the Bedouin problem in Sinai, and make them feel that Egypt is a country for Bedouins and all Egyptians", referring to the new law.<sup>352</sup> The government under Mursi issued a new law in September 2012, giving unprecedented ownership rights to the local residents of Sinai. However, although the law was supposed to provide especially the Bedouins with rights of ownership, it ended up excluding several of them. First of all, the law banned land ownership on the eastern border of the governorate (with the exception of Rafah).<sup>353</sup> This is an area almost exclusively populated by the Bedouins. Secondly, decree no. 14 of 2012 states that all Egyptian citizens holding a second foreign nationality, or those who are descendants of at least one non-Egyptian parent, including of course all non-Egyptian citizens, must sell their rights to property (being private or commercial) within 6 months. Many Bedouins in Sinai are born by parents with no identity records; some are married to non-Egyptian citizens, and others acquired additional citizenships when they fled

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<sup>349</sup> Pelham, "Sinai: The Buffer Erodes," p.19.

<sup>350</sup> Ashraf.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid.; al-Haddad.

<sup>352</sup> Fayad.

<sup>353</sup> Nadeem Karkabi, "Lifestyle Migration in South Sinai, Egypt: Nationalisation, Privileged Citizenship and Indigenous Rights," *International Review of Social Research* 3, no. 1 (2013).

Sinai during the years of Israeli occupation. All of these factors are therefore now preventing them from gaining landownership.<sup>354</sup>

### ***Dialogue Rather than Violence***

Hilmi al-Gazzar also stressed the need to allow the Bedouins to “express themselves in another way than through violence”.<sup>355</sup> Therefore he underlined the need to *listen* to all of Egypt’s citizens, including the radicals in Sinai. Instead of just approaching the situation with military and police violence, al-Gazzar believes dialogue should be attempted.<sup>356</sup> In extension, many of my sources emphasized that the right to freedom of expression is essential to hinder terror.

As shown in the previous chapter, my sources believe that the government’s use of violence towards the Bedouins had only aggravated the situation. All of my sources were clear that the FJP needed to improve relationships with the Bedouins, and that this was something the prior regime had made difficult with its excessive use of violence and oppression. Ammar Fayad said: “When people are afraid and people do not have a minimum level of human rights, they will rebel”.<sup>357</sup> Following the terrorist attacks between 2004 and 2006, the Mubarak regime started its battle against terrorists in the peninsula. The authorities fought the terrorists by an exceptionally brutal use of violence. Many Bedouins claimed their relatives were convicted in unfair trials, and have demanded that the government revoke the sentences. During his time as president, Mursi promised that cases where Sinai Bedouins were tried *in absentia* under the former regime would be reviewed.<sup>358</sup> Nussiba Ashraf also criticized the Mubarak regime for only dealing with Sinai “as a security issue”, and that “every relation between the regime and the people in Sinai was through the security forces”. She underlined that even though they needed more military in the area, the Mubarak regime had used its forces “in a wrong way to deal with the issue”.<sup>359</sup> In the media, the FJP and the previous president Mursi have been accused of being too soft in their approach to Sinai because of their reluctance to “employ heavy-handed tactics to stop the increasing flow of arms and militants into

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<sup>354</sup> Nabil Shawkat, "The tragic fate of Sinai's dual-nationals," *Ahram Online*, November 20, 2012, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContentP/4/58680/Opinion/The-tragic-fate-of-Sinai-dualnationals.aspx> (accessed Mai 4, 2013).

<sup>355</sup> al-Gazzar.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

<sup>357</sup> Fayad.

<sup>358</sup> It is uncertain in what degree this happened during the time Mursi was president.

<sup>359</sup> Ashraf.

the peninsula” and also because of “his [Mursi’s] seeming disinterest in avenging the deaths of Egyptian soldiers [...]”.<sup>360</sup> Ashraf told me that what the FJP would do different was to keep an open dialogue, like sending delegations to Sinai to talk with the tribe leaders. She added that Mursi had already been to North Sinai three times during 2012, which was more times than Mubarak was in North Sinai during his thirty years in power.<sup>361</sup> While he was president, Mursi also promised to establish a committee of Sinai Bedouins to give advice on local issues.<sup>362</sup> In 2012 there were many abductions in Sinai, and Mursi used local Bedouin leaders to mediate between authorities and kidnappers in an effort to free the kidnapped. The general approach of dialogue rather than military force was also the reaction after terrorist attacks.<sup>363</sup> As a response to this, Mursi was accused of being “naive and unfit to rule” in the media because of his approach of “mediation with tribal chiefs, rather than the standard military response”.<sup>364</sup> In March 2013, Mursi met with the North Sinai tribal chiefs to discuss the new landownership law. As a result of the meeting, the annual budget for development projects in the governorate was raised from 50 million Egyptian pounds to 1 billion. After the meeting with Mursi, the delegation met with representatives of the SCAF to discuss the possibility of cancelling the 2012 resolution that banned landownership on the eastern border of the governorate, as this was considered a security matter out of the government’s hands.<sup>365</sup>

### ***Civil and Political Rights***

My sources also stressed that they wanted to include the Bedouins in decision-making processes and political institutions. Walid al-Haddad supplemented by saying that Mursi “is very keen to have Bedouins, Nubians and others participating in political life.”<sup>366</sup> Murad Ali said that in order to halt the radicalization of Sinai, the government should allow the Bedouins to

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<sup>360</sup> Aziz, "Did the Sinai situation doom Morsi?".

<sup>361</sup> Ashraf.

<sup>362</sup> "Morsi promises review of all Sinai Bedouin court cases under Mubarak," *Ahram Online*, October 5, 2012, <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/140/54884/Egypt/The-Balance-Sheet/Morsi-promises-review-of-all-Sinai-Bedouin-court-c.aspx> (accessed August 8, 2013).

<sup>363</sup> Aziz, "Did the Sinai situation doom Morsi?".

<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

<sup>365</sup> "Morsy meets Sinai tribal chiefs," *Egypt Independent*, March 1, 2013, <http://www.egyptindependent.com/news/morsy-meets-sinai-tribal-chiefs> (accessed Mai 6, 2013).

<sup>366</sup> al-Haddad.

participate effectively in political decisions, in economic development, and in social activities, encouraging them to establish a proper civil community. All [of this is] important to bring them back to the country.<sup>367</sup>

Amr Arfan stated that one of the reasons why the radicalization occurred could be the exclusion of the Bedouins from political institutions, stating that the FJP “will let the people of Sinai enter the government’s institutions”.<sup>368</sup> My informants said that it was useless trying to exclude someone from participation in the political institutions in Egypt. They referred to their own history, saying the MB had been active since 1928, and most of the time its members were suppressed and no matter who were in government, they had tried to hinder the MB members from participation in politics. Still, after eighty years of struggle, the FJP won both a parliamentary and a presidential election. One source added: “The Egyptian people will not stop working for justice.”<sup>369</sup> Many of my sources emphasized the need to improve the democratic institutions in Sinai for all its inhabitants. Murad Ali argued that the relationship between the government and the Bedouins had to improve because “when people feel that their government is not serving them, they could easily rebel against it”.<sup>370</sup> Therefore, both he and Nussiba Ashraf emphasized the need to “make the Bedouins more loyal to their land” and that the way to do this was by providing the Bedouins with the same rights as other Egyptians.<sup>371</sup> Nussiba Ashraf told me that the FJP saw the inclusion of the people in political institutions as vital to make “the people feel that they are heard.”<sup>372</sup>

## **5.2 Development, Security and Equal Rights to All Egyptians**

In conclusion: The party’s official program, public statements and the majority of my sources underlined the development of Sinai as the primary tactic to permanently halt the radicalization. The FJP members stated that they wanted to develop Sinai by increasing investments in the area and by providing “the people of Sinai” with improved education institutions, better health care and increased job opportunities.

Although not mentioned explicitly in the FJP’s program, all of my sources underlined that they also needed to permanently increase the deployment of military

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<sup>367</sup> Ali.

<sup>368</sup> Arfan.

<sup>369</sup> Sayyid.

<sup>370</sup> Ali.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

<sup>372</sup> Ashraf.

and security forces in Sinai. They argued that this was only possible through the amendment or termination of the Camp David Accords. They were not just arguing that they needed more military forces to tackle “today’s terrorists”, but they also emphasized the need to permanently deploy more soldiers to Sinai in order to provide the people with security and to prevent aggression from potential foreign enemies. Furthermore, my sources found it deeply unfair that Israel, through the accord, was determining the quantity of Egypt’s military forces deployed inside Egyptian land. The FJP members were also concerned with the improvement of the quality of the security and military forces, arguing that the brutal way of using these forces in the past had damaged the relationship between the central government and the Bedouins. My informants said they were going to include the Bedouins in their development project, and that this would show the Bedouins they were no longer neglected. They would also focus on dialogue rather than the use of military force, and moreover, they underlined the significance of providing the Bedouins with the same rights that other Egyptians enjoy, such as rights of landownership and other civil and political rights.



## **6 A New Policy Towards Sinai and the Bedouins?**

The terrorist attack that struck Taba in 2004 marked the beginning of a new wave of Islamist violence in Egypt, this time with a change of location; namely the Sinai Peninsula. The group convicted of the attack consisted mainly of Bedouins and Egyptian-born Palestinians. The perpetrators of previous terrorist attacks in Egypt were typically men from mainland Egypt, so the Taba attack also marked a change in the typical terrorist identity.

The Egyptian revolution of 2011 took a different form in Sinai than in the rest of Egypt. Bedouin groups overpowered government forces and established a form of self-rule. Terrorist attacks and crimes increased, along with religious conservatism. After Mursi won the presidential election and the new Cabinet was sworn in on August 2, 2012, a hot topic in the Egyptian political climate was how the post-revolution government was going to deal with the Sinai issue. During my fieldwork, my sources in the FJP believed that the perpetrators of the attacks in Sinai were predominantly Bedouins. They further asserted that the Bedouins' reason for rebelling was primarily the policy of the previous Mubarak regime, stating that the FJP would lead a new and improved policy towards Sinai and its people.

In this chapter I compare the FJP's policy towards Sinai with that of the Mubarak regime by looking at four policy recommendations. The ICG, the Chatham House and the Washington Institute highlight various aspects of the situation and present slightly different recommendations. Combined they argue that in order to halt and permanently solve the radicalization of Sinai, the Egyptian government should: (1) Implement a comprehensive development plan for the entire Sinai, (2) increase the military and security presence in the peninsula (it was strongly recommended that these forces work in accordance with human rights and the rule of law), and (3) improve Egypt's relationships with Sinai's neighbours Israel and (4) similarly for Gaza. Embedded in these recommendations was the importance of a radical improvement in the relationship between the Sinai Bedouins and the central Egyptian government. Through exploring the FJP's policy in these four areas, I will answer my research question on whether and how the FJP represented a new policy towards the Bedouins in Sinai.

## 6.1 A Comprehensive Socio-Economic Development of Sinai

Although the Mubarak regime made the southern Sinai an attractive tourist destination, only a few benefitted from this development. Throughout the past thirty years the Mubarak regime systematically favoured the Nile Valley migrants in Sinai, while the regime neglected to provide the Bedouins with socio-economic- and cultural rights. Most of Sinai lack basic infrastructure and suffers from deficiencies in both education and healthcare. Additionally, the Mubarak regime systematically promoted the Pharaonic heritage at the expense of Sinai's Bedouin traditions and gave no effort to provide them with any polyethnic rights, nor any self-government rights.

All the three research institutions recommended that the government put together a comprehensive social and economic development plan for Sinai, which deals with the region as a whole, and takes account of the socio-economic interdependence of the north and the south. The two reports state that the government should work to eliminate all criteria and procedures discriminate against the local population, and also support and promote the Sinai Bedouin traditions and practices as a recognized part of Egyptian culture.

The FJP stated that they regarded Sinai as a neglected area, but that the party's policy was going to change this. The FJP was going to implement a comprehensive socio-economic development plan in order to fight poverty, improve the education system, the health care and the infrastructure, underlining the importance of including the Bedouins in these projects.

The most obvious explanation for this policy is my sources own clarification for why they wanted to undertake it. They underlined poverty, neglect and discrimination, as important reasons why people turn to violence. Therefore, they assumed that in order to stop the radicalization of Sinai and to gain control of the area, the most effective policy would be to stop the on-going discrimination of the Bedouins (that they believe are rebelling), and secure their socio-economic rights. My informants stated they did not believe that discrimination and the lack of development *alone* could explain the terrorism that has been affecting Sinai throughout the previous decade. However, they believed that the FJP's plan to ensure development through an inclusive economic and social policy that takes into account

basic needs of the entire population of Sinai, would make the Bedouins feel grateful and give them a feeling of belonging to the nation, and thus, promote social peace.

My sources declared that another reason for focusing on development was simply that Sinai is a part of the Egyptian land, and the peninsula is full of resources waiting to be utilized. They argued that the development and utilization of the area would benefit *all* of the Egyptian people. The development would not only generate wealth, but also solve the problems of overpopulation and unemployment in other parts of Egypt. In addition, it would provide a more sustainable development, thought focusing on cultivating Egyptian land and reducing the import of certain food items, which was an important part of the FJP program.

The FJP agreed that the Bedouins were increasingly radical because they had been discriminated against. However, the FJP's understanding of this builds on the underlying assumption that the Bedouins desired to become fully integrated members of the Egyptian state, to obtain equal rights and be treated in the *same* way as other Egyptian citizens. Ashraf's statement: "they want to be like us, they want to be Egyptians," is only one of several statements that express this attitude. The statement also indicates that my sources perceive the Bedouins as not yet fully Egyptian. Still, in general they refused to label the Bedouins as a "minority" and more often that not, used the phrase "the people of Sinai" rather than the Arabic word for "Bedouin", when clearly talking about the Bedouins. As they did not recognize the group as a minority, the party was not planning to support and promote the Sinai Bedouin traditions and practices as a recognized part of Egyptian culture, or provide them with any financial support and legal protection for certain practices associated with the group's culture. This means that although the FJP was going to provide the Bedouins with socioeconomic rights, they were not planning on providing them with any polyethnic rights.

The importance of not referring to Bedouins as a minority group could be explained in several ways. Firstly, the reluctance to use the word minority could stem from the perception of "minority" as "the other" or someone who is "not equal". Thus, the use of the word would undermine the unity of the nation. Looking at the FJP's program and their public statements, it becomes clear that the party is largely concerned with achieving national unity and fighting sectarianism. An example here is Mursi's statement: "Christians in Egypt are partners in this homeland, not a minority. They have the full right in their state, because they are an

important component of this nation.”<sup>373</sup> Does this mean that if the Christians are a minority then they are consequently not “partners”, and have fewer rights than the majority? If this was the FJP’s understanding of what it means to be a minority in Egypt, then stating that the Bedouins are not a minority seems to fit with their inclusive policy towards the group.

Another aspect of the focus on “unity” and the reluctance to label anyone a “minority” is the prevailing notion during the 2011 revolution was that all Egyptians are equal and that they should stand together. Many of my sources underlined this notion when they said that “we are all Egyptians” or “we are all one hand”, which are slogans from the revolution. My informants told me that they wanted to make the Bedouins feel like they are a part of the Egyptian society and that they are treated as equals to other Egyptians. It is likely that the FJP sought to adopt a policy that concurred with slogans and ideas prevailing during the 2011 revolution, as this would in it self provide legitimacy.

Secondly, Mubarak was accused of pursuing a divide and conquer-policy in entire Egypt. My sources said that the Mubarak regime had deliberately led a campaign to portray the Bedouins as smugglers, drug-dealers and terrorists, in order to justify the suppression of the group. Although my informants said that some Bedouins were conducting illegal activities, they regarded that as natural considering the neglect and discrimination by the Mubarak regime. Members of the MB were under the Mubarak regime often labelled as “terrorists”, although they themselves argued they were fighting for “freedom and justice”. In this regard, it is also important to note that my sources usually referred to the perpetrators of various attacks in Sinai using the term “radical Islamists”, rather than “terrorists”. It is first of all, likely that the FJP needed to distance itself from Mubarak and was reluctant to blame a certain group, as this would be considered to be a divide and conquer strategy, and perhaps also because they know all too well that “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter”.

On the other side, to acknowledge that the Bedouins are a minority could mean that the group is actually entitled to certain minority rights. Kymlicka underlines that a common conflict between a nation state and a minority nation, is that the minority could demand rights to both use and, to a degree, govern certain territories that the

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<sup>373</sup> "Egypt President Morsi: I Refuse to Describe Christians as Minority".

minority view as *their land*, while the government might perceive the same area as belonging to the nation state. As we have seen, the Bedouins have demanded transit fees and compensation for the use of tribal lands. To acknowledge the Bedouins historical territorial claims to the Sinai land would put a halt to the FJP's grand plans of utilizing and developing the peninsula. Besides, the Bedouins constitute today the majority of the population in the area, but could have become a minority in a short period of time, if the FJP implemented their policy. This would again have allowed the central government to control the area without fear of secession. Bringing "Egyptian settlers" to the peninsula could be viewed as a political way of gaining territorial control and cultural dominance in Sinai.

But then again, although not referring to the group as a minority, during he served as president, Mursi actually vowed to establish a committee of Sinai Bedouins to give advice on local issues. According to Kymlicka, a liberal government should recognize self-government rights of minority nations that are intended to enable a nation to govern itself and maintain its own culture. Relations between the government and the minority group should be determined by the use of dialogue. The FJP also underlined the importance of dialogue with Bedouin recognized tribal chiefs on policy changes or negotiations on other issues that regarded "the people of Sinai". Furthermore, during the time the FJP was in the government, the authorities did not interfere with the Bedouin tribal courts, the Bedouins own economic committees or their security committees playing the police role in the peninsula. The FJP's practice here may indicate a limited degree of *de facto* Bedouin *self-government rights*. However, I could not trace any public acknowledgement or recognition of for example the Bedouin courts or rulings, during the time Mursi and the FJP were in the government. This suggests that the FJP was probably not planning to legalize or formalize any self-government rights for the Bedouins.

The FJP perceived the situation as being a result of neglect and discrimination, which concurs with the explanation presented by the research institutes. The FJP wanted to implement a comprehensive socio-economic development plan for the entire Sinai, which would provide the Bedouin population with: (1) Enhanced infrastructure, (2) improved educational institutions, (3) better health care and (4) create a viable industry in various fields that would improve employment opportunities. The FJP also planned to (5) populate Sinai by encouraging and facilitating migration from mainland Egypt. On these five points, the FJP follows the

policy recommendation of promoting the Bedouins socio-economic rights. However, the party did not seek to develop any policy that would support and promote the Sinai Bedouins' traditions and culture as a recognized part of the Egyptian culture, although this was recommended by the ICG report. The first four points of the FJP's policy is radically different from the Mubarak regime's policy. While the Mubarak regime excluded the Bedouins from the development, the FJP said it wanted to include and "incorporate" them. Regarding the last point, both the FJP and the Mubarak regime shared a centralist nationalistic vision for Sinai, which generally ignored the special characteristics of the Bedouin way of life. The party's refusal to recognize the Bedouins as a minority meant that, similarly to the Mubarak regime's policy, also the FJP neglected to provide this group with any cultural or polyethnic rights. Yet, the FJP's practice of dealing and negotiating with recognized leaders amongst the Bedouins, signals an important step towards limited *de facto* self-government rights for the Bedouins.

## **6.2 Increased Deployment of Military and Security Forces**

The Mubarak regime never violated the Camp David Accords' regulations for military deployment in Sinai. Still, its reaction towards the radicalization of Sinai has essentially been confined to the security sphere: tracking down and eliminating the terrorists. Misusing the emergency law for almost a decade, the regime violated human rights, especially civil and political rights, by using the police and army to suppress the local population. The regime did little or nothing to encourage participation of Sinai indigenous peoples in the political life and used divide-and-conquer tactics in orchestrating the meagre local representation allowed.

The Washington Institute article argues that Egyptian soldiers should be temporarily deployed along the boarder with Israel and Gaza, and that Egypt should be allowed to increase its overall military presence in Sinai. The ICG and the Chatham House reports argues that in addition to the presence of a strong military, good intelligence is of great importance, which in turn depends on a fundamentally cooperative attitude of the majority of the local population. In order to enhance relationship between the Bedouins and the Egyptian authority, the government must respect and protect the Bedouins human rights.

The FJP's military plan for Sinai, included the launching of a temporary military operation, but they also stressed the need to *permanently* deploy increased

military and security forces in the peninsula. However, when searching for the FJP's security strategy for Sinai, both my sources and the FJP's program underlined the importance that the security forces operate in accordance with the constitution, the principles of the rule of law, and human rights. My sources further stated that they were planning to hire the Bedouins in the military and security services and to include the Bedouins in decision-making processes and political institutions.

My sources explained why they needed the temporary military operation in the following way. First of all, it was necessary in order to protect Sinai's civilians from attacks, as the development of Sinai would take time, while the government was responsible for providing security for the entire Egyptian population. Further, my informants said that the temporary military operation was launched in order to arrest people who were conducting violent actions against civilians, military and policemen, and to protect the infrastructure. I will argue that most nation states would probably do the same in a similar situation.

In order to explain why the FJP underlined the need to *permanently* increase the presence of the military forces in Sinai, my informants argued that considering the Sinai's topography and strategic importance, the number currently allowed by the Camp David Accords is too low, also in a peaceful Sinai. Besides, many viewed the permanent increase in military deployment as a matter of principle. As we have seen in the FJP program and various statements, the party is rather concerned with the strengthening of Egypt's position in the Arab world. They argued that Sinai is Egyptian land and found it deeply unfair that Israel determined the size of the military forces the Egyptian nation could deploy. Some also stated that to fully control Sinai would give a political advantage, for instance when discussing or re-negotiating the terms of the Camp David Accords. Furthermore, my sources believed that the utilization of Sinai's resources was not possible without proper security arrangements. Therefore, I will argue that although the FJP wanted to deploy increased security forces in Sinai "to combat terrorists" and start to develop and utilize Sinai, the underlying importance of the increased deployment of military forces, was actually more an issue of a nation's sovereign rights to their own land.

One way of explaining the FJP's focus on civil and political rights when addressing the issue of increased deployment of military forces could be interpreted as a political discourse, trying to create a positive image of the party, knowing this would generate positive reactions. However, the importance of respecting human

rights was underlined both by local politicians (who did not generally seem to weigh their words, being rather hostile in their rhetoric when talking about Israel), as well as by more prominent politicians (who seemed to have received considerable media training and had a very diplomatic, or politically correct, way of speaking). Moreover, during his time as president, Mursi was criticized for being too reluctant to use “heavy-handed military means” in Sinai and for relying “too much on dialogue”.<sup>374</sup> My informants said that violence could sometimes be interpreted as a political language. They told me that excluding someone from taking part in democratic institutions might pressure them to use violence in order to be heard. My interviewees referred to their own history, saying that even though previous regimes had labelled them as “terrorists”, discriminated against them and tried to hinder the MB from participating in the political sphere, they never gave up. And after eighty years of struggle, the FJP won both the parliamentary and the president elections. For my informants this was a “proof”<sup>375</sup> that providing Bedouins with civil and political rights was the best way to put an end to the violence. There are many similarities in how members of the MB and Bedouins were (mis-) treated during the Mubarak regime. I got the impression that my sources in the FJP related to the Bedouins’ situation and showed a genuine concern for their human rights. My sources argued that the FJP’s focus on forgiveness, development and dialogue, was in the long-term perspective more effective than the use of military force. If they truly believed this, then their focus on dialogue and the importance of the security services respecting human rights makes sense.

In addition to the factors mentioned in section 6.1, my sources perceived the current situation in Sinai as a result of a security deficiency and of the security forces’ violations of human rights. This explanation concurs with the explanation presented by the research institutes. The party wanted to: (1) Permanently deploy increased military and security forces in Sinai, (2) hire Bedouins in military and security services, and (3) work to include Bedouins in political institutions and decision-making processes. In addition, (4) the FJP underlined the importance of the security services working in accordance with the rule of law and human rights. The party’s policy largely corresponds with the policy recommendations, with the exception of the Washington Institute recommending that the increased military

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<sup>374</sup> Aziz, “Did the Sinai situation doom Morsi?”.

<sup>375</sup> They used the word: *dalil*



force close to the boarder should only be temporarily. The FJP's policy underlines the importance of guaranteeing Bedouins' civil- and political rights and the focuses on dialogue rather than using security forces in tackling the radicalization. This is essentially different from the Mubarak regime's policy.

### **6.3 A Strained Relationship with Israel**

The Mubarak regime's relations with Israel were stable. After Hamas won the 2007 elections in Gaza, the Mubarak regime joined Israel in imposing a hermetic seal on Gaza and erecting a wall, forcing the people of Gaza and the Bedouins to continue their trade underground. All radical Islamist groups that emerged in Sinai during Mubarak's rule and until the present day have an anti-Israel rhetoric. Although the militants are said to be a minority, also Bedouin leaders have requested the Egyptian parliament to amend the Camp David Accords with Israel.

The Chatham House report and the Washington Institute article argues that tighter security cooperation with Israel would benefit Egypt as a whole. The Chatham House report also suggests the formalization of access and movement as well as of the trade relationship. The ICG report do not explicitly recommend that the government improve its relationship with Israel, but states that a comprehensive and lasting resolution of the Sinai question can only be achieved in the context of a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

References to Israel in the Egyptian public discourse under the FJP's period in government were hostile, for example, Mursi did not utter Israel's name. All of my sources underlined that the FJP's relationship with Israel was strained. Some even stated that they regarded Israel as their enemy. A few of my sources blamed Israeli intelligence for facilitating attacks and/or infiltrating the Bedouins in Sinai. A strategic military cooperation and/or trade cooperation was out of question, according to my informants. The FJP wanted to amend the Camp David Accords, some even argued in favour of their termination. However, Mursi continuously stressed that Egypt will respect the international treaties it has signed and Israel permitted increased deployment of military in Sinai though "the Agreed Activities Mechanism", without altering the agreement. Furthermore, Mursi actually functioned as a mediator between Gaza and Israel following the 2012 attack on Gaza. All in all, during the time the FJP was in the government, there was no radical transformation in Egypt's relations with Israel.

The FJP's ambivalence could be explained in different ways. An explanation for a more hostile rhetoric towards Israel could be that the FJP would gain popular support among the Bedouins in Egypt by adopting a negative tone towards Israel. I will argue that the FJP may very well be aware that the Bedouins have a close cultural and ideological connection to Gaza, and that the Mubarak government's cooperation with Israel challenged the legitimacy of his regime. Furthermore, as the FJP is an Islamic party with roots in MB, which supports the Palestinian cause, close ties with Israel would damage their legitimacy. The Bedouins do not share the Pharaonic legacy and have developed a strong resentment towards the central Egyptian government. As shown previously, the FJP has several times referred to Sinai as "a land where the prophets have walked" and underlined Islamic values as common values for the party and the people of Sinai. It seemed like the FJP perceived the Bedouin identity as more dependent on religion than belonging to a nation state. Therefore, the FJP might want to distance itself from Israel and underline their Islamic values in order to establish trust and a better relationship with the Bedouins in Sinai.

The fact that some of my sources blamed Israeli intelligence and the Mubarak regime for facilitating attacks and/or infiltrating the Bedouins, is interesting because it discharges the Bedouins of some responsibility. The Sharm al-Shaykh bombing was distinctive in size and in number of fatalities, killing over eighty people. Saying the perpetrators had received assistance by Israeli intelligence and/or the Mubarak regime in order to execute this attack, makes "the Bedouin threat" in some way less dangerous. Firstly because the Mubarak regime was overthrown, this would mean that the Bedouins are not able to execute a similar attack. Secondly, because the FJP said they would not cooperate with Israel and that this, accordingly, would make it more difficult for the Israeli intelligence to infiltrate the Bedouins across the border. Furthermore, the resentment towards Israel and the Mubarak regime is something that many Egyptians can agree on, and therefore they make perfect scapegoats. Blaming Israel or the Mubarak regime instead of the Bedouins, also underline the FJP's policy that stressed national unity, as mentioned previously in this chapter.

On the other hand, there was no radical transformation in Egypt's relations with Israel. It could be that the FJP acknowledged that there were some advantages in keeping peace with Israel. Perhaps the party realised that a stable and good relationship with Israel would provide better communication and security

coordination between the two countries, something that would also mean a more secure situation for most Bedouins living in Sinai. Besides, the Egyptian government received about \$1.5 billion a year in aid from the U.S., and it seemed that the FJP was keen not to jeopardize the access to this funding. An example could be that president Mursi, who had previously refused to talk to Israelis, or even pronounce the country's name, actually worked as a mediator between Gaza and Israel during the Gaza crisis, where he then had to negotiate with Israel. This suggests that there was an opportunity for the FJP to be a moderating force in the approach towards Sinai's neighbours, including Israel. The FJP was probably also aware of the fact that Israel is militarily superior to Egypt, and Egypt's security interests along the Sinai border and inside Sinai provide Egypt with motivation to continue security cooperation with Israel.

As shown above, while the FJP believed that Israel was benefiting from a weak Sinai, the scholars describe Israel as suffering from the current situation. During the time the FJP was in the government, president Mursi declared he would not talk with Israel. Thereby he signalled that: (1) The security cooperation would not be enhanced while the FJP was in the government, (2) the party underlined that the Camp David Accords had to be revoked or amended, and (3) the FJP was not planning to normalize any access of movement or trade. As the FJP perceived the situation differently from the scholars, the fact that they were not planning to follow the recommendation to *improve* its relations with Israel, is expected. Nevertheless, the relationship with Israel did not radically change while Mursi was president and the FJP was in the government. The FJP's rhetoric towards Israel changed, but the actual policy largely remained unchanged under the Mubarak regime. Regardless of the actual policy, leading a hostile rhetoric towards Israel and focusing on common Islamic values rather than classical Egyptian nationalism when dealing with the Bedouins, probably would have improved the relationship between the Bedouins and the central Egyptian government. The vitality of the improvement of this relationship was embedded in most of the research institutes' recommendations.

#### **6.4 A Tighter Cooperation with Gaza**

The Mubarak regime considered Hamas a hostile and threatening entity that cooperated with the MB. Throughout Mubarak's last years, Egyptian officials publicly repeated their concerns that Hamas was fostering militancy in Sinai. On the

other hand, the negative attitude towards Hamas actually benefited the Sinai Bedouins economically as smuggling rose to new heights.

The Chatham House report argues that the Egyptian government should consider a formalization of access and movement, as well as trade relationship with Gaza, across the Sinai borders. To fill the security vacuum, the Egyptian government should also enhance security coordination between Egypt and the government in the Gaza Strip. The ICG report do not explicitly recommend that the government improve its relationship with Gaza, but as mentioned above, argues that a lasting resolution of the Sinai question can only be achieved in the context of a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

During the time the FJP was in the government, Egypt's relationship with Hamas was significantly improved. Both the FJP's program and my sources emphasized the importance of supporting the Palestinian case, and all denied involvement of Hamas in the terrorist actions in Sinai. During the FJP's time in the government, the security cooperation with Hamas expanded considerably. The Mursi government and Hamas ministers had conducted negotiations over possible trade cooperation. Tribal chiefs from Sinai were also included in discussions related to these issues. However, the party did not realize most of these plans during its short period of time in government.

The fact that the FJP would deny the involvement of Hamas in terrorist actions in Sinai is only expected considering the FJP's relationship with the MB. As Hamas is a fraction of the Brotherhood they share a similar ideology. My informants explain their reason for not blaming Hamas in another way. They argued that the people of Gaza had democratically elected Hamas and the group needed to win their trust, meaning that Hamas had to show its people that it is able to provide them with jobs and food. This is dependent on the Rafah border and the tunnels remaining open, and so it would be irrational for Hamas to participate in any terrorist activities, because this would close the border and the tunnels. Although I find this explanation highly plausible, I am not convinced that Hamas is actually in full control of all its members. I believe that another reason why it was so important for the FJP to deny any involvement of Hamas in terrorism was that if the Egyptian people perceived Hamas as a terrorist organisation, this would affect how the FJP was viewed. Therefore, I believe that the rejection of Hamas' involvement might also be an important political move for the FJP not to be seen as "criminals by association".

There is also another reason why the FJP might want to deny the presence of Hamas, and similarly deny the presence of al-Qaida, in Sinai. Sinai has a large tourist industry, and the FJP would benefit from the return of the tourists who basically disappeared after the 2011 revolution. The acknowledgement of the presence of the notorious al-Qaida or Hamas in Sinai might damage the industry further. Therefore, my sources could have deliberately underestimated the threat. On the other hand, they did acknowledge that there might be “radical Islamists” coming from Gaza, from other parts of Egypt or from other countries, and that these people may be inspired by the al-Qaida ideology.

Furthermore, it is not unlikely that the FJP considers the situations in Gaza and Sinai as ultimately linked, and stabilization of one, would lead to stabilization of the other. Therefore, a motivation for a good relationship with Hamas could be that the increased communication and security coordination between the two could prevent future attacks. Also trade relations were likely to improve the economic situation. Especially for the Bedouins living in the north, a free-trade zone would provide the Bedouins with a legitimate source of income. As the FJP believes poverty is an important reason why people turn to violence, improving the economic situation for the people they believe are rebelling would be an expected action. Moreover, as mentioned above, most Bedouins, especially those living in the north, have a close relationship with Palestine, culturally, economically and ideologically. A government that supports Hamas, would by this group, therefore be considered more legitimate.

As seen above, the FJP, the Washington Institute article and the Chatham House report perceive the situation differently when it comes to Hamas’s role in the radicalization of Sinai. My sources in the FJP denied that Hamas was, but acknowledged that there might be Palestinians coming from Gaza and contributing to the radicalization. My sources also agreed that the tunnel smuggling poses a problem for stability in Sinai. The FJP planned to: (1) established security cooperation with Hamas. Furthermore, the Hamas prime minister and Mursi talked about: (2) Opening a free trade zone in return for the closure of the tunnels, (3) the reopening of the Egyptian consulate, (4) the linkage of Gaza to Egypt’s electricity grid, and (5) easing of travel restrictions for Palestinians. This means that regardless of whether or not Hamas was involvement in the radicalization, the FJP was planning to follow the Chatham House recommendation and improve its relations with Hamas. Based on

the Bedouins' close ties to Hamas, the FJP's aim to improve their overall relations with Hamas probably also improved their relations with the Bedouins. In this regard, the FJP's policy was fundamentally different from that of the Mubarak regime.

## 6.5 Conclusion: Old Puzzle with New Pieces

Much research has been devoted to analysing the MB's ideology while they stayed in the opposition, and many have speculated on what kind of policy the MB would lead if they were in power. In this thesis I have addressed how the FJP, an MB-based party in the government, was planning to address the issue of the increasingly radicalized Sinai in a post-revolution state. The aim of this thesis has been to investigate whether and how the FJP represented a new policy in a post-revolution nation, through focusing on one area of interest, namely Sinai and its indigenous population, the Bedouins.

To answer this question I compared the FJP's policy with that of the Mubarak regime, through looking at four policy recommendations on approaching the radicalization of Sinai. These four recommendations all agree that the central government should improve its relationship with the Bedouins and recognize their *human rights*. Kymlicka argues that the general respect for human rights is not sufficient when addressing certain minority groups. He argues that ethnic minority groups and minority nations could demand *polyethnic rights* and that a minority nation could furthermore demand *self-government rights*. I wanted to see how the FJP planned to approach the Bedouins and what types of rights the party was planning to provide the group with.

By means of interviewing several members of the FJP and studying the party's program and public statements, I discovered that the FJP's perception of the current situation in Sinai largely concurs with picture presented in the ICG and Chatham House reports and the Washington Institute article. They all agree that the situation is a result of underdevelopment of the bigger part of the peninsula, discrimination and suppression of the Bedouins, in addition to decades of security neglect of Sinai that have made it a lawless space attractive for terrorists groups. My interviewees agree that the perpetrators of the various attacks are predominantly Bedouins, but that also Palestinians and non-Sinai residents might be involved. While the research institutes also say that Hamas and al-Qaida might be involved, the FJP rejects this. Furthermore, some of my sources in the FJP suggested the involvement of the

Mubarak regime and Israeli intelligence, something that the research did not mention. While my interviewees believed that Israel was benefiting from a weak Sinai, the scholars describe Israel as suffering from the current situation. I discovered that the FJP was planning on following nearly all of the four recommendations, with the exception of an improved relationship with Israel.

The way the FJP was planning to implement the policy recommendations showed that the party was aiming at a significant improvement in the government's relationship with the Bedouins. The FJP stated they would end the discrimination and suppression of the Bedouins and provide them with jobs, landownership, improved healthcare, infrastructure and education. Although the FJP also wanted to increase the deployment of military and security forces in Sinai, the party underlined the importance for these forces to respect the rule of law and international human rights conventions. Moreover, the FJP would also start to conscript the Bedouins to the army, hire them in other security services and include them in political institutions. The FJP's policy of improving their relations with Hamas and having a hostile tone towards Israel could, considering the Bedouins' close ties to Hamas and their grievances towards Israel, improve the overall relations between the Bedouins and the central government. Additionally, the focus on Islam rather than Egyptian nationalism when dealing with the Bedouins could represent an effort in building a common platform, and improving the relationship further.

The general approach towards the Bedouins under the Mubarak regime was to treat the minority as alien residents, subject to physical segregation, economical discrimination and, in some cases, deprivation of political rights. While the Mubarak regime's approach to the Bedouins was in many ways exclusive, I would describe the FJP's approach as inclusive. The FJP's general policy of providing the Bedouins with cultural, political and socioeconomic rights is radically different from that of the Mubarak regime and, hence, it is new.

However, looking closer at how the FJP was going to implement the above-mentioned policy changes, I discovered not everything was changed. Both the Mubarak regime and the FJP regard Sinai as the Egyptian government's property and an almost empty land, just waiting to be populated. Neither the FJP, nor the Mubarak regime had any policy in order to support and promote the Sinai Bedouin traditions and culture as a recognized part of Egyptian culture. The Mubarak regime sought to "Egyptianize" Sinai and the Bedouins, and the regime suppressed the Bedouin

tradition and culture in favour of the Pharaonic-Egyptian culture. The vast majority of my informants argued that the Bedouins wanted to be treated as “real” Egyptians, stating that they did not regard them as a “minority”. None of my sources argued that Bedouin culture and history should be taught in schools, or that the government should endorse projects that sought to promote this heritage. With regard to these issues, the FJP’s policy and the Mubarak regime’s policy shared a centralist, nationalistic vision for Sinai and its people.

My sources seem to believe that the respect for human rights was enough to protect and satisfy the Bedouins. The FJP was not planning to provide the Bedouins with any financial support and legal protection for certain practices associated with the Bedouin culture. In other words, the party was not planning to provide the minority with any *polyethnic rights*. This is not unexpected, as the FJP stated that they did not consider the group as a minority. When it comes to granting *self-government rights* to the Bedouins, I pictured that this would be impossible because my informants all agreed that the Bedouins were no minority. However, the FJP dealt with the Bedouin tribal leaders and representatives, and by that, in practice recognized them as such. Furthermore, during the time the FJP was in the government, the authorities did not interfere with the Bedouin tribal courts, their economic committees or the Bedouins’ own security committees playing the police role in the peninsula. Additionally, Mursi vowed to establish a committee of Sinai Bedouins to give advice on local issues and focused on dialogue with Bedouin recognized tribal chiefs, regarding policy changes or negotiations on other issues. All of this may indicate that Bedouins would *de facto* get limited self-government right after all. I will still underline, that there were no signs that the party was planning to legalize and formalize self-government of the Bedouins.

To get a broader insight on this topic, some other areas should be studied. First of all, the way my sources used the term “minority”, and their eagerness to deny that the Bedouins represent a minority, made me think that my sources in the FJP, and perhaps Egyptians in general, have a different understanding of this word than we do in Western cultures. During my fieldwork, I got the impression that my informants’ reluctant use of the word “minority” was derived from the perception of “a minority” as a group that is “not equal” and, thus, does not deserve equal rights as the majority. However, it could also mean the opposite: That if a government acknowledge a group as a minority, then this could mean that group is entitled to, or deserves to



achieve special rights, *as a group*. If these rights go against the government's own interests, then this would of course be a conflict. Indeed, it would be interesting to see another research project that could conduct a discourse analysis of the word "minority" in the Egyptian context.

Secondly, a question that needs to be addressed is how much power the FJP really had while being in the government. As we have seen, many of my sources' plans for Sinai failed to materialize. This could certainly be explained by the FJP's short period in the government, or that they prioritised other issues. Still, Sinai is a vital security area for Egypt, and it seemed like the military was controlling at least parts of it. For example, Bedouin leaders were negotiating landownership rights in the border area with members of the SCAF, and not with president Mursi or members of his Cabinet. The FJP was the party that held most ministers in the Qandil Cabinet, but at its most the party occupied twelve out of 35 minister positions. Two other ministerial posts belonged to other Islamist parties, while the remaining ministers had no party affiliations and were described as independent. However, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Finance (until January 2013) and the Minister of Interior all served under the military appointed Ganzuri-Cabinet the preceded the Qandil government. And although Mursi appointed a new Minister of Defence, al-Sisi led the coup that overthrew Mursi. These are the most vital and influential minister posts in Egypt. The four above-mentioned minister are frequently described by the media, as supportive of the military rather than of the FJP. I underline that I have not done any research on this subject, but it could perhaps explain the lack of implementation of several policy plans in Sinai under president Mursi.

Thirdly, I want to conduct a new round of fieldwork in Sinai in order to learn more about the Bedouins' views on the FJP and the MB. It would be interesting to find out how large the radical militant groups are in comparison to Bedouins tribes living in peace. Scholarly reports, and more often, the media, have talked about "the Bedouins' various demands", although the Bedouins are not a single unified group. It would also be interesting to do research how strong more separatist tendencies are among the Bedouins, in opposition to those Bedouins that clearly wants to be provided with equal citizen rights as other Egyptians and actively participate in the Egyptian society.

In conclusion: The Mubarak regime discriminated the Bedouins and violated their human rights: social, economical, cultural, civil and political. The ICG, the Chatham House and the Washington Institute have provided the Egyptian government with several policy recommendations on how to permanently solve the radicalization of Sinai. Although the two reports and the article do not use the term *human rights*, in sum, they clearly imply that these rights should be protected and promoted in order to achieve an enduring solution. Kymlicka argues that some minority groups should, in addition to basic human rights, be given polyethnic rights, and he adds that some groups should get a limited right to self-government.

I discovered that my sources in the FJP did not portray the Bedouins as a minority, and were therefore not planning to give the Bedouins any *polyethnic rights*. On the other hand, my informants underlined the importance of protecting civil and political rights of all individuals, in addition to implementing a comprehensive socio-economic plan benefitting Sinai's entire people. Regardless of my sources' view on the Bedouins, the party's practice of dealing with Bedouin representatives, and not interfering with various tribal institutions could indicate a pragmatic view on the Bedouin's limited *self-government rights*. The conclusion of this thesis show that the FJP's policy plans to a large extent follow the most repeated policy recommendations, and thus, the party's policy towards Sinai and the Bedouins represent a rather different approach from that of the Mubarak regime.

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## Appendix

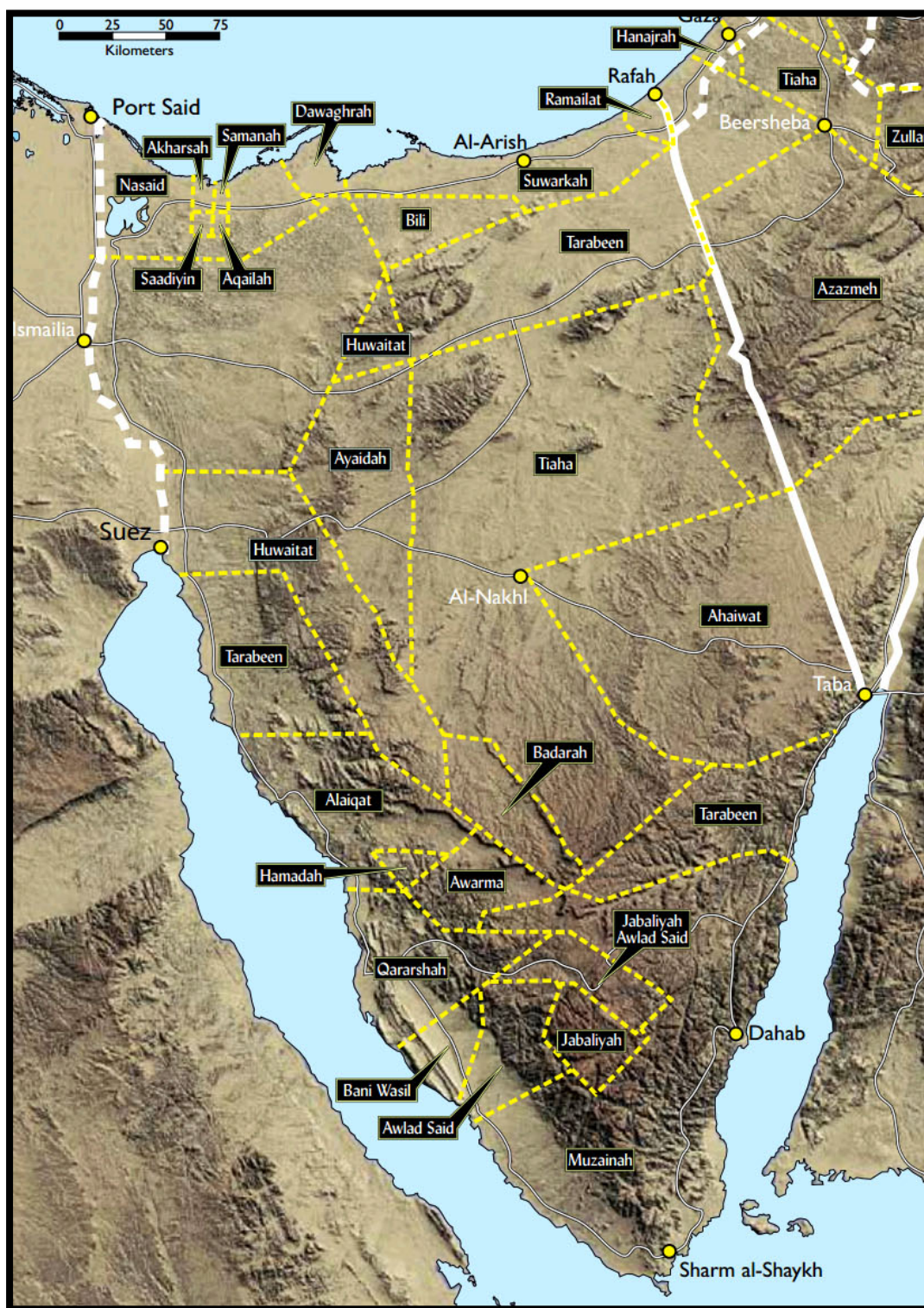
Figure 1. Map of the Sinai Peninsula



Source: *Geographic Guide*, available at: <http://www.geographicguide.com/africa-maps/sinai.htm>



**Figure 2. Bedouin Tribal Configuration**



Source: *Discover Sinai*, available at: <http://discoversinai.net/english/tourist-information/sinai-maps/>